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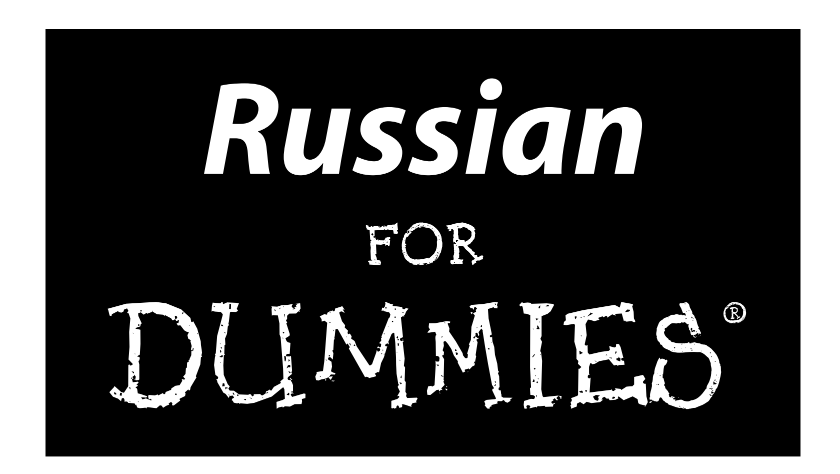
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Introduction

Speaking more than one language is like living more than one life, one of the ancient philosophers said. And it's true — traveling in a foreign country such as Russia suddenly becomes a lot more exciting when you can engage in elegant small talk with a hotel receptionist, compliment your tour guide's dress, or actually read the menu and order the food that you really want. Being able to ask for things instead of pointing at them and getting directions from the locals instead of staring at a map are some of the little things that make you feel at home.

You don't even need to cross the ocean to immerse yourself in Russian culture; you can find little Russian neighborhoods (or even pretty big ones!) in many American cities. Whether your colleagues, your neighbors, or your friends speak Russian, the best way to win their hearts is to speak their language to them.

Now, *Russian For Dummies* won't make you a fluent reader of Dostoevsky in the original (most Russians themselves need somewhat of a preparation for that). It will, however, equip you with phrases necessary to function in many life situations, from shopping to visiting the theater. And little gems of cultural wisdom offered throughout the book help you not only translate the language, but also understand Russians so much better. So, buckle up, and good luck on your journey! Or, as the Russians like to say, **Zhelayem vam udachi!** (zhih-*lah*-eem vahm oo-*dah*-chee; We wish you good luck!)

About This Book

The best thing about *Russian For Dummies* is that you don't have to read all the way through it to get the information you need. You can open the table of contents, find the section that interests you at the moment, and start talking! You don't have to read the previous chapters to understand any of the sections of this book. And if you decide that you want more information about something, a convenient system of cross-references takes you to just the right place.

Another thing you don't need to do is memorize long vocabulary lists or grammar rules. We give you ready-made phrases; you just need to read them and start using them right away to impress your Russian friends!

Conventions Used in This Book

Here are some conventions that allow you to navigate through this book with maximum ease:

- We present Russian phrases in *transliteration* (Russian sounds represented with English characters). You can see the Cyrillic alphabet in Chapter 1. Russian terms are easily found in the text because they are set in **boldface.**
- Each Russian word is followed by its pronunciation and English translation in parentheses. In each pronunciation, the stressed syllable is in *italics.*

A little example to give you an idea of what we mean: The phrase for "I love you" in Russian is **Ya tebya lyublyu.** (ya tee-*bya* lyu-*blyu*; I love you.)

The meaning of a phrase doesn't always equal the sum of the individual words the phrase consists of. In this case, we talk about a *literal meaning* (the meaning of the individual words) and an *idiomatic meaning* (the actual meaning of the phrase in conversation). If the literal translation of a phrase differs from its idiomatic meaning, we give you both the literal and the idiomatic meanings in parentheses. For instance: **Kak dyela?** (kahk dee-*lah*; How are you? *Literally:* How is business?)

In each chapter, look for the following elements:

- **Talkin' the Talk —** These real-life dialogues illustrate how native speakers use words and phrases in a particular section of the book. These informal dialogues are the actual conversations you may hear in similar situations. And the CD has the audio version of these dialogues to help you grasp them even faster!
- **Words to Know —** This section follows every **Talkin' the Talk** and provides pronunciation and transcription of new words and expressions encountered in the dialogue.
- **Fun & Games —** Find this section at the end of each chapter. These fun activities allow you to use the new words and phrases encountered in each chapter to answer questions and solve puzzles.

Foolish Assumptions

When we started writing this book, we tried to imagine what our future reader was going to be like. In the end, we came up with a list of foolish assumptions about who we think wants to read this book. Do you recognize yourself in these descriptions?

- You know no Russian — or if you took Russian in high school, you don't remember a word of it.
- You're not looking for a book that will make you fluent in Russian; you just want to know some words, phrases, and sentence constructions so that you can communicate basic information in Russian.
- You don't want to have to memorize long lists of vocabulary words or a bunch of boring grammar rules.
- You want to have fun and learn a little bit of Russian at the same time.

How This Book Is Organized

Russian For Dummies consists of five parts and an audio CD. Each part of the book offers something different.

Part I: Getting Started

In this part, find the basic essentials of the Russian language. Chapter 1 shows you that you already know some Russian, although it may be a surprise to you. We introduce the Russian alphabet and also give you an idea of how to use your knowledge of English to decipher some Russian words. Chapter 2 gives you a crash course on Russian grammar; it's also the right place to turn to if you want to know Russian numbers. And finally, find your first Russian words — greetings and introductions — in Chapter 3.

Part II: Russian in Action

Part II prepares you for most social situations that you need to handle in Russian. Chapter 4 shows you how to make small talk; Chapters 5 and 6 prepare you to talk about food and shopping. When you have the essentials covered, find out how to talk about fun things, such as going out (Chapter 7), and

sports, reading, and other hobbies (Chapter 8). Chapter 9 equips you with the necessary phrases to make phone calls and send mail. For navigation through serious situations like getting a job or finding an apartment, refer to Chapter 10.

Part III: Russian on the Go

This part covers all the aspects of traveling, from planning your trip (Chapter 11) and discussing transportation (Chapter 12), to arranging for a place to stay (Chapter 13) and settling your financial matters (Chapter 14). Chapter 15 also shows you how to ask for directions, and Chapter 16 prepares you for handling emergencies.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

The Part of Tens is an unusual part of this book; it gives you lists of fun things to know, such as ten ways to pick up Russian quickly, ten holidays that Russians celebrate, and ten things never to do or say in Russia or to Russians. This part is also the place to find ten favorite Russian expressions and to pick up ten phrases that make you sound authentically Russian.

Part V: Appendixes

Russian For Dummies also includes four appendixes, which bring together some useful information. In Appendix A, find Russian verb tables. Appendix B is a convenient mini-dictionary for your quick reference. Appendix C offers the answer key to the Fun & Games sections of each chapter. And Appendix D helps you navigate through the attached audio CD; it contains the description of all the dialogues on the CD and tells you in which chapter you can find the text of the dialogue.

Icons Used in This Book

For your convenience, we marked some information in this book with special icons. Check out this guide to the icons, and the next time you see one of them, you'll know what to expect!



This icon indicates which Talkin' the Talk dialogues are included on the audio CD that comes with this book. This CD allows you not only to read but also to hear real conversational Russian.



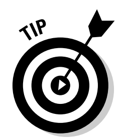
From famous Russian writers to a polite way to decline an invitation, this icon marks a wide variety of curious and useful facts about Russian culture.



If you're curious about how the Russian language works, and if you want to expand your command of Russian to the extent of making up your own phrases, these bits of grammatical information may be of interest to you.



This icon points out some important information about Russian that's worth remembering.



This icon signals a useful bit of information that can make life easier for you, whether it's a handy way to remember a useful word or an insider's advice on how to better handle a certain situation.



This icon attracts your attention to something you need to know to avoid a common mistake.

Where to Go from Here

Now that you're familiar with the anatomy of *Russian For Dummies,* you can embark on your journey. You can start anywhere, and you don't have to go in a specific order. Just choose a topic that seems appealing, find the corresponding chapter in the table of contents, and start speaking Russian!

If you're at a loss about where to start, Chapter 2 may be a good place to get a grasp of the essentials of Russian grammar. Another good starting point is Chapter 1, which quickly boosts your confidence by pointing out all the Russian words you already know. Or, you can go straight to the sections that deal with something you need urgently: Ordering ice cream is covered in Chapter 5, for example.

Wherever you decide to start, you can find plenty of useful phrases to get you speaking Russian and exploring the benefits that your language skill brings. And now we wish you **Schastlivogo puti!** (shees-*lee*-vuh-vuh poo-*tee*; bon voyage!)

Part I
Getting Started



In this part . . .

Part I is the beginning of your exciting journey. Here you get the essential information you need to take you through the rest of the book. Chapter 1 puts you at ease as you breeze through the Russian alphabet and discover that you actually already know quite a few Russian words. Chapter 2 gives you the basics of Russian grammar, which you may want to refer to throughout the rest of the book. And in Chapter 3, you start putting your newfound knowledge to work right away with popular greetings and introductions in Russian. So, get ready to start speaking **po-russki** (pah *roos*-kee; Russian)!

Chapter 1

You Already Know a Little Russian

In This Chapter

- Getting a grip on Russian words you know
- Understanding the Russian alphabet
- Pronouncing words properly
- Discovering popular expressions
- Reading Russian with confidence

Welcome to Russian! Whether you want to read a Russian menu, enjoy Russian music, or just chat it up with your Russian friends, this is the beginning of your journey. In this chapter, trust your eyes, ears, and intuition, and you quickly discover that Russian isn't that hard after all. When you're done with this chapter, you'll be able to recognize all the letters of the Russian alphabet, discover the basic rules of Russian pronunciation, and be able to say some popular Russian expressions and idioms.

Scoping Out Similarities between English and Russian

You may be surprised to find out that English and Russian are very distant relatives. They both come from the same ancestor — Sanskrit — and both belong to the same family of Indo-European languages. The similarities don't stop there. If you know English, you already know many Russian words.

In this section, you discover Russian words that are already part of English, and you find out about Russian words that have the same meaning and pronunciation as their English counterparts. We also warn you about a few words that sound similar in both languages but have very different meanings.

Identifying Russian words in English

As the world becomes more and more international, languages and cultures are constantly borrowing from and lending to one another, and Russian is no exception. Many Russian words that now appear in English either describe food and drinks or came into use during important historical periods.

Eating and drinking up

If you drink **vodka,** then you can already speak some Russian, because the word, like the drink, came from Russia. Maybe you can even rattle off the differences between **Smirnoff** (smeer-*nohf*) and **Stoly.** If so, you're already on your way to sounding like a real Russian, because **Smirnoff** is a Russian person's last name, and **Stoly** is an abbreviation for the word **Stolichnaya** (stah-*leech*-nuh-ye), which means "metropolis" in Russian.

When you go out to eat, do you like to order a great big bowl of **borsh'** (bohrsh'; beet soup) with sour cream? Well, then you're eating one of the most famous Russian dishes, and when you order it, you're using a completely Russian word.

Hearing historical terms

If you're interested in world history, then you probably know that the head of the Russian state in previous centuries was not the president or the king, but the **tsar,** which is just what they called him in Russia, too: **tsar'** (tsahr').

Some of the best-known Russian words actually came into English during the Cold War period, when the Soviet Union was competing with the United States in the areas of science, technology, military, and education. Who would've thought that a short and simple Russian word, **sputnik** (*spoot*-neek; traveling companion), which refers to the first Soviet artificial Earth satellite, would become a household word in English and even lead to a revolution in American space education? And if you've ever used the word **sputnik,** then you were speaking Russian. **Sputnik** means "companion" in Russian.

Maybe you followed world news in the 1980s. If so, you may remember a guy by the name of Mikhail Gorbachev, who reformed Russian Soviet society. He also added two new words to the English language: **glasnost** and **perestroika,** or in Russian: **glasnost'** (*glahs*-nuhst'; openness) and **pyeryestroika** (pee-ree-*strohy*-kuh; restructuring). These words have become part of American speech. Even Ronald Reagan, who was president during Gorbachev's era, liked to repeat the famous Russian phrase, **Dovyeryai, no provyeryai!** (duh-vee-*ryahy,* noh pruh-vee-*ryahy*; Trust but verify!), when talking about the new nuclear weapons treaties he was negotiating with the Soviet Union.

Recognizing English words in Russian

Russian today is filled with words that came from English. Words that have a common ancestry are called *cognates.* Cognates are like foreign political refugees or immigrants. They settle down in their new country and start to adapt to their new life, and even begin to look and behave like native words of their new country.



Your ability to recognize English cognates when you read or hear Russian will be very helpful to you. Cognates are your allies, and they greatly increase your Russian vocabulary. Here are some examples of common cognates you should recognize:

- **aeroport** (ah-eh-rah-*pohrt*; airport)
- **akadyemiya** (uh-kuh-*dye*-mee-ye; academy)
- **algyebra** (*ahl*-geeb-ruh; algebra)
- **amyerikanyets** (ah-mee-ree-*kah*-neets; American man)
- **astronomiya** (uhs-trah-*noh*-mee-ye; astronomy)
- **bank** (bahnk; bank)
- **biologiya** (bee-ah-*loh*-gee-ye; biology)
- **biznyes** (*beez*-nehs; business)
- **biznyesmyen** (beez-nehs-*mehn*; businessman)
- **boks** (bohks; boxing)
- **dyemokrat** (dee-mah-*kraht*; democrat)
- **diryektor** (dee-*ryek*-tuhr; director)
- **doktor** (*dohk*-tuhr; doctor)
- **dokumyent** (duh-koo-*myent*; document)
- **effyektivnyi** (eh-feek-*teev*-nihy; effective)
- **fyermyer** (*fyer*-meer; farmer)
- **filarmoniya** (fee-luhr-*moh*-nee-ye; philharmonic)
- **futbol** (foot-*bohl*; football)
- **gamburgyer** (*gahm*-boor-geer; hamburger)
- **gyenyetika** (gee-*neh*-tee-kuh; genetics)
- **gyeografiya** (gee-uhg-*rah*-fee-ye; geography)

- **gimnastika** (geem-*nahs*-tee-kuh; gymnastics)
- **gol'f** (gohl'f; golf)
- **intyeryesnyj** (een-tee-*ryes*-nihy; interesting)
- **istoriya** (ees-*toh*-ree-ye; history)
- **kommunizm** (kuh-moo-*neezm*; communism)
- **kosmonavt** (kuhs-mah-*nahft*; astronaut)
- **kosmos** (*kohs*-muhs; cosmos)
- **kryedit** (*kree*-deet; credit)
- **lityeratura** (lee-tee-ruh-*too*-ruh; literature)
- **muzyka** (*moo*-zih-kuh; music)
- **nos** (nohs; nose)
- **profyessor** (prah-*fye*-suhr; professor)
- **sotsiologiya** (suh-tsih-ah-*loh*-gee-ye; sociology)
- **sport** (spohrt; sports)
- **sportsmyen** (spahrts-*myen*; sportsman or athlete)
- **stadion** (stuh-dee-*ohn*; stadium)
- **studyent** (stoo-*dyent*; student)
- **styuardyessa** (styu-uhr-*deh*-suh; stewardess)
- **tyeatr** (tee-*ahtr*; theater)
- **tyelyevizor** (tee-lee-*vee*-zuhr; TV)
- **tyennis** (*teh*-nees; tennis)
- **tyeoriya** (tee-*oh*-ree-ye; theory)
- **univyersityet** (oo-nee-veer-see-*tyet*; university)
- **viski** (v*ees*-kee; whiskey)
- **viza** (*vee*-zuh; visa)
- **vollyejbol** (vuh-leey-*bohl*; volleyball)
- **zhiraf** (zhee-*rahf*; giraffe)
- **zhurnal** (zhoor-*nahl*; journal)
- **zoologiya** (zuh-ah-*loh*-gee-ye; zoology)

Watching out for words that may seem similar but aren't



Beware of *false cognates!* These are words that look and sound like allies (cognates) but aren't. You won't find too many of them, but they can be tricky. And when used incorrectly, they can lead to some funny and even embarrassing situations. Here's a list of the false friends that trip English speakers up the most:

- **simpatichniy** (seem-puh-*teech*-nihy; good-looking) — This word doesn't mean "sympathetic," so be careful who you say it to!
- **normal'no** (nahr-*mahl'*-nuh; okay, fine) — This word doesn't mean "normally"!
- **klass** (klahs; classroom) — This word is the room where a class takes place but doesn't refer to the academic course itself. It also indicates a group of kids in the same grade.
- **banda** (*bahn*-duh; band of gangsters) — This word has nothing to do with a musical band, so be careful when you use it!
- **magazin** (muh-guh-*zeen*; store) — This word doesn't mean "magazine," but you can buy one there!
- **familiya** (fuh-*mee*-lee-ye; last name) — This word isn't your family, but your family name.

Talkin' the Talk



Vladimir and Irina are talking about their new university. How many English cognates can you recognize?

Vladimir: **Irina, ya schitayu, chto biologiya, astronomiya, i gyeografiya ochyen' intyeryesnyye pryedmyety.**
ee-*ree*-nuh, ya sh'ee-*tah*-yu shtoh bee-ah-*loh*-gee-ye, uhs-truh-*noh*-mee-ye, ee gee-uhg-*rah*-fee-ye *oh*-cheen' een-tee-*ryes*-nih-ee preed-*mye*-tih.
Irina, I think that biology, astronomy, and geography are very interesting subjects.

Irina: **Nye soglasna. Samyye intyeryesnyye pryedmyety v etom universityetye sotsiologiya, istoriya, algyebra, muzyka i tyeatr.**
nee-sahg-*lahs*-nuh. *sah*-mih-ee een-tee-*ryes*-nih-ee preed-*mye*-tih v *eh*-tuhm oo-nee-veer-see-*tye*-tee suh-tsih-ah-*loh*-gee-ye, ees-*toh*-ree-ye, *ahl*-geeb-ruh, *moo*-zih-kuh ee tee-*ahtr.*
I disagree. The most interesting subjects at this university are sociology, history, algebra, music, and theater.

Vladmir: **A tvoj profyessor po lityeraturye intyeryesnyj?**
ah tvohy prah-*fye*-suhr puh lee-tee-ruh-*too*-ree een-tee-*ryes*-nihy?
Is your literature professor interesting?

Irina: **Da, intyeryesnyj, no u nyego bol'shoj nos i on vysokij kak zhiraf.**
dah, een-tee-*ryes*-nihy, noh oo nee-*voh* bahl'-*shohy* nohs i ohn vih-*soh*-keey kahk zhih-*rahf*.
Yes, he's interesting, but he has a big nose, and he's as tall as a giraffe.

Words to Know

ya schitayu	ya sh'ee-tah-yu shtoh	I believe that
ochyen'	oh-cheen'	very
pryedmyety	preed-mye-tih	academic subjects
nye soglasna	nee sahg-lahs-nuh	I disagree
u nyego	oo nee-voh	he has

Looking at the Russian Alphabet (It's Easier than You Think)

If you're like most English speakers, you probably think that the Russian alphabet is the most challenging aspect of picking up the language. The idea of having to memorize all those letters, some of them weird-looking, can be a little bit daunting to the newcomer. But not to worry. The Russian alphabet isn't as hard as you think. In fact, compared to some other features of Russian, such as case ending and verbs (see Chapter 2 for details on those), the alphabet is a piece of cake. When you're done with this section, you'll be able to recognize and pronounce all the letters of the Russian alphabet.

From A to Ya: Making sense of Cyrillic

The Russian alphabet is based on the Cyrillic alphabet, which was named after the ninth-century Byzantine monk, Cyril (see the sidebar "Who was this Cyril guy, anyway?" later in this chapter). Throughout the centuries, Cyril's original alphabet went through many attempts to shorten it from its original 43 letters. Today the alphabet is still pretty lengthy — 33 letters in all, compared with the 26 letters in the English alphabet. But don't panic. You don't have to master every letter. Throughout this book, we convert all the letters into familiar Latin symbols, which are the same symbols we use in the English alphabet. This process of converting from Cyrillic to Latin letters is known as *transliteration.* We list the Cyrillic alphabet below for those of you who are adventurous and brave enough to prefer reading real Russian instead of being fed with the ready-to-digest Latin version of it. And even if you don't want to read the real Russian, check out Table 1-1 to find out what the whole fuss is about regarding the notorious "Russian alphabet."



Notice that in most cases a transliterated letter corresponds to the way it's actually pronounced. As a rule, you may assume that the transliteration fairly well represents the actual pronunciation. The biggest exceptions to this are the letter **Йй,** which is transcribed as **j** but pronounced like an English *y,* and the soft sign **Ьь,** which is transcribed as **'** but only softens the preceding consonant.



As we walk you through the Russian alphabet, pay attention to the way the alphabet is transliterated, because that's how we spell out all the Russian words throughout the rest of the book. Table 1-1 has the details on Cyrillic letters, their transliteration, and their pronunciation. You can also find a guide to pronunciation on the audio CD that comes with this book.



Scholars do not agree on the letter **j**. Some believe that it's a consonant; others think that it's a vowel. We don't want to take sides in this matter and are listing it both as a consonant and a vowel.

Table 1-1 The Russian Alphabet in Cyrillic

The Letter in Cyrillic	*Transliteration (The Corresponding Letter or Sound in the English Alphabet)*	*Pronunciation*	*Vowel or Consonant*
Аа	**A**	*ah* if stressed as in f**a**ther; *uh* if appearing in any unstressed syllable, as in hum**a**n	Vowel
Бб	**B**	*b* as in **b**ook; *p* if at the end of the word	Consonant
Вв	**V**	*v* as in **V**ictor; *f* if at the end of the word	Consonant
Гг	**G**	*g* as in **g**reat; *k* if at the end of the word	Consonant
Дд	**D**	*d* as in **d**uck; *t* if at the end of the word	Consonant
Ее	**Ye**	*ye* as in **ye**s; *ee* as in s**ee**k if appearing in any unstressed syllable	Vowel
Ёё	**Yo**	*yo* as in **yo**ke	Vowel
Жж	**Zh**	*zh* as mea**s**ure; *sh* if at the end of the word	Consonant
Зз	**Z**	*z* as in **z**ebra; *s* if at the end of the word	Consonant
Ии	**I**	*ee* as in p**ee**k	Vowel
Йй	**J**	very short *y* as bo**y** or Ma**y**	Vowel or Consonant
Кк	**K**	*k* as in **K**ate	Consonant
Лл	**L**	*l* as in **l**amp	Consonant

The Letter in Cyrillic	*Transliteration (The Corresponding Letter or Sound in the English Alphabet)*	*Pronunciation*	*Vowel or Consonant*
Мм	**M**	*m* as in **m**o**mm**y	Consonant
Нн	**N**	*n* as in **n**ote	Consonant
Оо	**O**	*oh* as in as in t**a**lk; *ah* as in p**a**rk, if appearing one syllable before the stressed syllable; *uh* as in Morm**o**n, if appearing in any other unstressed syllable	Vowel
Пп	**P**	*p* as in **p**ort	Consonant
Рр	**R**	flap *r*, similar to trilled r in Spanish, as in "madre," for example	Consonant
Сс	**S**	*s* as in **s**ort	Consonant
Тт	**T**	*t* as in **t**ie	Consonant
Уу	**U**	*oo* as sh**oo**t	Vowel
Фф	**F**	*f* as in **f**act	Consonant
Хх	**Kh**	*kh* like you're clearing your throat, or like the German "ch"	Consonant
Цц	**Ts**	*ts* as in ca**ts**	Consonant
Чч	**Ch**	*ch* as in **ch**air	Consonant
Шш	**Sh**	*sh* as in **sh**ock	Consonant
Щщ	**Sh'**	soft *sh*, as in **sh**eep	Consonant
ъ	**"**	hard sign (makes the preceding letter hard)	Neither
Ыы	**Y**	*ih*	Vowel
ь	**'**	soft sign (makes the preceding letter soft)	Neither
Ээ	**E**	*e* as in **e**nd	Vowel
Юю	**Yu**	*yu* as in **u**se	Vowel
Яя	**Ya**	*ya* if stressed as in **ya**rd; *ee* if unstressed and not in the final syllable of the word; *ye* if unstressed and in the final syllable of the word	Vowel



Who was this Cyril guy, anyway?

Picture this: The year is sometime around AD 863. Two Byzantine monks and brothers, Cyril and Methodius, were commissioned by their emperor to Christianize the East European pagan tribes. To carry out the emperor's order, the two brothers had to transcribe the Bible into Slavic. This task was very daunting because the Slavs didn't have any written language at the time and the Slavic dialect they were working with contained a lot of bizarre sounds not found in any other language.

One of the brothers, Cyril, came up with an ingenious idea: create a Slavic alphabet from a mishmash of Greek, Hebrew, and old Latin words and sounds. That was a clever solution because by drawing on different languages, Cyril's alphabet contained practically every sound necessary for the correct pronunciation of Russian.

In honor of Cyril's clever idea, the alphabet became known as the Cyrillic alphabet. The Cyrillic script is now used by more than 70 languages, ranging from Eastern Europe's Slavic languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Macedonian) to Central Asia's Altaic languages (Turkmen, Uzbek, Kazakh, and Kirghiz).

I know you! Familiar-looking, same-sounding letters

You may notice that some of the Russian letters in the previous section look a lot like English letters. The letters that look like English and are pronounced like English letters are:

- Аа
- Кк
- Мм
- Оо
- Тт

Whenever you read Russian text, you should be able to recognize and pronounce these letters right away.

Playing tricks: Familiar-looking, different-sounding letters



Some Russian letters look like English letters but are pronounced differently. You want to watch out for these:

- **Вв:** It looks like English Bb, at least the capital letter does, but it's pronounced like the sound *v* as in *victor* or *vase.*
- **Ee:** This one's a constant annoyance for English speakers, who want to pronounce it like *ee,* as in the English word *geese.* In Russian, it's pronounced that way only if it appears in an unstressed syllable. Otherwise, if it appears in a stressed syllable, it is pronounced like *ye* as in *yes.*
- **Ëë:** Don't confuse this with the letter **Ee.** When two dots appear over the Ee, it's considered a different letter, and it is pronounced like *yo* as in *yoke.*
- **Нн:** It's not the English Hh. It just looks like it. Actually, it's pronounced like *n* as in *Nick.*
- **Рр:** In Russian it's pronounced like a trilled *r* and not like the English letter *p* as in *Peter.*
- **Сс:** This letter is always pronounced like *s* as in *sun* and never like *k* as in *victor.*
- **Уу:** This letter is pronounced like *oo* as in *shoot* and never like *y* as in *yes.*
- **Хх:** Never pronounce this letter like *z* or *ks* as in the word ***Xerox.*** In Russian the sound it represents is a coarse-sounding, guttural *kh,* similar to the German *ch.* (See "Surveying sticky sounds," later in this chapter, for info on pronouncing this sound.)

How bizarre: Weird-looking letters

As you've probably noticed, quite a few Russian letters don't look like English letters at all:

- **Бб**
- **Гг**
- **Дд**
- **Жж**
- **Зз**
- **Ии**
- **Йй**
- **Лл**
- **Пп**
- **Фф**
- **Цц**
- **Чч**
- **Шш**
- **Щщ**
- **ъ**
- **Ыы**
- **Ь**
- **Ээ**
- **Юю**
- **Яя**



Don't panic over these letters. Just because they look weird doesn't mean they're any harder to say than the others. It's just a matter of memorizing their proper pronunciations. (Refer to Table 1-1 for details on how to say each letter.)

You may recognize several of these weird letters, such as **Ф**, **Г**, **З**, **Л**, **П**, from learning the Greek alphabet during your fraternity or sorority days.

Sounding Like a Real Russian with Proper Pronunciation

Compared to English pronunciation, which often has more exceptions than rules, Russian rules of pronunciation are fairly clear and consistent. In this section, you discover some of the basic rules and patterns of Russian pronunciation and find out about important irregularities with vowels and consonants. In addition, we show you how to say some of the more difficult letters and sounds.

Understanding the one-letter-one-sound principle

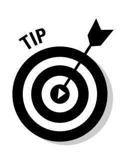


Russian is a *phonetic language,* which means that for the most part one Russian letter corresponds to one sound. For example, the letter **К** is always pronounced like *k,* and the letter **М** is always pronounced like *m.* This pattern is different from English, where a letter can be pronounced in different ways depending on where it shows up in a word. For instance, consider the two different pronunciations for the letter *c* in the words *cat* and *race.* This difference almost never happens in Russian.

Giving voice to vowels

Vowels are the musical building blocks of every Russian word. If you flub a consonant or two, you'll probably still be understood. (To avoid such flubs, though, check out "Enunciating consonants correctly," later in this chapter.) But if you don't pronounce your vowels correctly, there's a good chance you won't be understood at all. So it's a good idea to get down the basic principles of saying Russian vowels, which we cover in the following sections.

That's stretching it: Lengthening out vowels

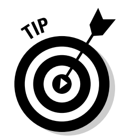


If you want to sound more Russian, don't shorten your vowels like English speakers often do. When you say **a, o,** or **u,** open your mouth wider and purposefully stretch out the sounds to make them a little bit longer. Imagine, for example, that you're in your room on the second floor, and your mom is downstairs in the kitchen. You call her by saying "Mo-o-o-m!" That's the way Russians say their vowels (except for the shouting part!).

Some stress is good: Accenting the right vowels



Stress is an important concept in Russian. Putting a stress in the wrong place isn't just a formal mistake. It can hinder communication, because the meaning of a word can change based on where the stress is. For example, the word **zamok** (*zah*-muhk) means "castle." However, if you shift the stress from the first syllable to the last, the word **zamok** (zuh-*mohk*) now means "lock."



Unfortunately, no (hard and fast) rules about stress exist. Stress in Russian is unpredictable and erratic, though you begin to recognize some patterns as you learn more. The harsh truth, however, is that each word has its own stress pattern. What happens if you stress the vowel in the wrong place? Certainly, nothing terrible: the earth will continue to rotate around its axis. What may happen, however, is that your interlocutor will have a hard time understanding you and take longer to grasp what you really mean. Before learning a new Russian word, find out which vowel to stress. Look in any Russian-English dictionary, which usually marks stress by putting the sign ´ over the stressed syllable. In a dictionary, **zamok** (*zah*-muhk; castle) is written **за́мок,** and **zamok** (zuh-*mohk*; lock) is written **замо́к.**

Vowels misbehavin': Reduction



Some Russian letters change their behavior depending on whether they're in a stressed or an unstressed syllable. The vowels **a, o, ye,** and **ya** do this a lot. When stressed, they behave normally and are pronounced in the usual way, but when they're in an unstressed position, they go through a process called *reduction.* This deviation in the vowels' behavior is a very important linguistic phenomenon that deserves your special attention. Not knowing it is like a double-edged sword: not only does it take other people longer to understand you (they simply won't recognize the words you're saying), but you also may find it hard to recognize the words you think you already know (but unfortunately store in your own memory with the wrong stress).

- **O,** which is normally pronounced like *oh,* sounds like *ah* (like the letter **a** in the word *father*) if it occurs exactly one syllable before the stressed syllable, and like a neutral *uh* (like the letter **a** in the word *about*) if it appears in any other unstressed syllable.

  A, which is pronounced like *ah* when it's stressed, is pronounced like a neutral *uh* (like the letter **a** in the word *about*) if it appears in any unstressed syllable.



The honest-to-goodness truth is that when the letter **a** appears in the syllable preceding the stressed syllable, its pronunciation is somewhere between *uh* and *ah.* We don't, however, want to burden you with excessive linguistic information, so we indicate the letter **a** as *uh* in all unstressed positions, even though we realize that some persnickety Russian language phonologists (pronunciation specialists) may take issue. Moreover, in conversational speech, catching the distinction is nearly impossible. If you say an unstressed **a** as *uh,* people will fully understand you.

- **Ye,** which is pronounced like *ye* (as in *yet*) in a stressed syllable, sounds like *ee* (as in *seek*) in any unstressed syllable.



When it appears at the end of a word, as in **viditye** (*vee*-dee-tee; (you) see; formal singular and plural), or after another vowel, as in **chayepitiye** (chah-ee-*pee*-tee-ee; tea drinking), an unstressed **ye** is actually pronounced somewhere between *ee* and *ye.* Russian phonologists (pronunciation experts) still debate which sound it's closer to. So for the sake of simplicity, we always render an unstressed **ye** as *ee.* If you say it that way, any Russian will understand you.

- An unstressed **ya** sounds either like *ee* (as in *peek*) if it's unstressed (but not in the word's final syllable) or like *ye* (as in *yet*) if it's unstressed and also in the final syllable of the word.

Here are some examples of how vowel reduction affects word pronunciation:

- You write **Kolorado** (Colorado) but say kuh-lah-*rah*-duh. Notice how the first **o** is reduced to a neutral *uh* and the next **o** is reduced to an *ah* sound (because it's exactly one syllable before the stressed syllable), and it's reduced again to a neutral *uh* sound in the final unstressed syllable.
- You write **khorosho** (good, well) but say khuh-rah-*shoh.* Notice how the first **o** is reduced to a neutral *uh,* the next **o** is reduced to *ah* (it precedes the stressed syllable), and **o** in the last syllable is pronounced as *oh* because it's stressed.
- You write **napravo** (to the right) but say nuh-*prah*-vuh. Notice that the first **a** is reduced to a neutral *uh* (because it's not in the stressed syllable), the second **a** is pronounced normally (like *ah*) and the final **o** is pronounced like a neutral *uh,* because it follows the stressed syllable.
- You write **Pyetyerburg** (Petersburg) but say pee-teer-*boork.* Notice how **ye** is reduced to the sound *ee* in each case, because it's not stressed.
- You write **Yaponiya** (Japan) but say ee-*poh*-nee-ye. Notice how the unstressed letter **ya** sounds like *ee* at the beginning of the word and like *ye* at the end of the word (because it's unstressed and in the final syllable).

Saying sibilants with vowels

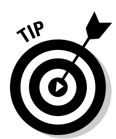
The letters **zh, ts, ch, sh,** and **sh'** are called *sibilants,* because they emit a hissing sound. When certain vowels appear after these letters, those vowels are pronounced slightly differently than normal. After a sibilant, **ye** is pronounced like *eh* (as in *end*) and **yo** is pronounced like *oh* (as in *talk*). Examples are the words **tsyentr** (tsehntr; center) and **shyol** (shohl; went by foot; masculine). The sound *ee* always becomes *ih* after one of these sibilants, regardless of whether the *ee* sound comes from the letter **i** or from an unstressed **ye.** Take, for example, the words **mashina** (muh-*shih*-nuh; car) and **bol'shye** (*bohl'*-shih; bigger).

Enunciating consonants correctly

Like Russian vowels (see the previous section), Russian consonants follow certain patterns and rules of pronunciation. If you want to sound like a real Russian, you need to keep the basics in the following sections in mind.

Say it, don't spray it! Relaxing with consonants

When pronouncing the letters **p, t,** or **k,** English speakers are used to straining their tongue and lips. This strain results in what linguists call *aspiration* — a burst of air that comes out of your mouth as you say these sounds. To see what we're talking about, put your hand in front of your mouth and say the word "top." You should feel air against your hand as you pronounce the word.



In Russian, however, aspiration shouldn't happen because consonants are pronounced without aspiration. In other words, say it, don't spray it! In fact, you should totally relax your tongue and lips before saying Russian **p, t,** or **k.** For example, imagine somebody who's just had a stroke. She won't be able to put too much effort into her consonants. Believe it or not, that's almost the way you should say your Russian consonants. Relax your speech organs as much as possible, and you'll say it correctly. To practice saying consonants without unnecessary aspiration, again put your hand in front of your mouth and say Russian cognates **park** (pahrk), **lampa** (*lahm*-puh), and **tank** (tahnk). Practice until you don't produce a puff of air with these words!

Cat got your tongue? Consonants losing their voice

Some consonants (**b, v, g, d, zh,** and **z**) are called *voiced consonants* because they're pronounced with the voice. Practice saying them out loud and you'll see it's true.



But when voiced consonants appear at the end of a word, a strange thing happens to them: They actually lose their voice. This process is called *devoicing.* They're still spelled the same, but in their pronunciation, they transform into their devoiced counterparts:

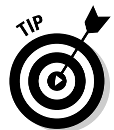
- **B** is pronounced like *p.*
- **V** is pronounced like *f.*
- **G** is pronounced like *k.*
- **D** is pronounced like *t.*
- **Zh** is pronounced like *sh.*
- **Z** is pronounced like *s.*

Here are some examples:

- You write **Smirnov** but pronounce it as smeer-*nohf* because **v** at the end of the word is pronounced like *f.*
- You write **garazh** (garage) but say guh-*rah****sh*****,** because at the end of the word, **zh** loses its voice and is pronounced like *sh.*

Nutty clusters: Pronouncing consonant combinations

Russian speech often sounds like an endless flow of consonant clusters. Combinations of two, three, and even four consonants are quite common. Take, for example, the common word for *hello* in Russian — **zdravstvujtye** (*zdrah*-stvooy-tee)*,* which has two difficult consonant combinations (**zdr** and **vstv**). Or take the word for *opinion* in Russian — **vzglyad** (vzglyat). The word contains four consonants following one another: **vzgl.**



How in the world do Russians say these words without choking? They practice, and so should you. Here are some words that contain consonant clusters you may want to repeat at leisure:

- **obstoyatyel'stvo** (uhp-stah-*ya*-teel'-stvuh; circumstance)
- **pozdravlyat'** (puh-zdruhv-*lyat'*; to congratulate)
- **prestuplyeniye** (pree-stoo-*plyen*-ee-ye; crime)
- **Rozhdyestvo** (ruzh-deest-*voh*; Christmas)
- **vzdor** (vzdohr; nonsense)
- **vzglyanut'** (vzglee-*noot'*; to look/glance)

Surveying sticky sounds

Some Russian letters and sounds are hard for speakers of English. Take a look at some of them and find out how to pronounce them.

The bug sound zh

This sound corresponds to the letter **Жж.** It looks kind of like a bug, doesn't it? It sounds like a bug, too! In pronouncing it, try to imitate the noise produced by a bug flying over your ear — zh-zh-zh . . . The sound is similar to the sound in the words "pleasure" or "measure."

The very short i sound

This sound corresponds to the letter **Йй.** This letter's name is *i kratkoye,* which literally means "a very short i," but it actually sounds like the very short English *y.* This sound is what you hear when you say the word bo**y**. You should notice your tongue touching the roof of your mouth when you say this sound.

The rolled sound r

This sound corresponds to the letter **Pp** in the Russian alphabet. To say it correctly, begin by saying an English *r* and notice that your tongue is rolled back. Now begin moving your tongue back, closer to your upper teeth and try to say this sound with your tongue in this new position. You'll hear how the quality of the sound changes. This is the way the Russians say it.

The guttural sound kh

The corresponding Russian letter is **Xx**. To say it, imagine that you're eating and a piece of food just got stuck in your throat. What's the first reflex you body responds with? Correct! You will try to cough it up. Remember the sound your throat produces? This is the Russian sound *kh.* It's similar to the German *ch.*

The revolting sound y

To say this sound correctly, imagine that you're watching something really revolting, like an episode from *Fear Factor,* where the participants are gorging on a plate of swarming bugs. Now recall the sound you make in response to this. This sound is pronounced something like *ih,* and that's how you pronounce the Russian **ы** (the transliteration is *y*). Because this letter appears in some of the most commonly used words, including **ty** (tih; you; informal), **vy** (vih; you; formal singular and plural), and **my** (mih; we), it's important to say it as best you can.

The hard sign

This is the letter **ъ.** While the soft sign makes the preceding sound soft (see the next section), the hard sign makes it — yes, you guessed it — hard. The good news is that this letter (which transliterates to ") is rarely ever used in contemporary Russian. And even when it is, it doesn't change the pronunciation of the word. So, why does Russian have this sign? For two purposes:

- To harden the previous consonant
- To retain the hardness of the consonant before the vowels **ye, yo, yu,** and **ya**

Without the hard sign, these consonants would normally palatalize (or soften). When a hard sign ъ separates a consonant and one of these vowels, the consonant is pronounced without palatalization, as in the word **pod"yezd** (pahd-*yezd*; porch), for example. However, don't worry too much about this one if your native language is English. Native speakers of English rarely tend to palatalize their Russian consonants the way Russians do it. In other words, if you're a native English speaker and you come across the situation described here, you probably make your consonant hard and therefore pronounce it correctly by default!

The soft sign

This is the letter ь (transliterated to '), and it doesn't have a sound. Its only mission in life is to make the preceding consonant soft. This sound is very important in Russian because it can change the meaning of a word. For example, without the soft sign, the word **mat'** (maht'; mother) becomes **mat,** which means "obscene language." And when you add a soft sign at the end of the word **von** (vohn; over there), it becomes **von'** (vohn') and means "stench." See how important the soft sign is?

So, here's how you can make consonants soft:

1. Say the consonant — for example, **l, t,** or **d.** Note where your tongue is. What you should feel is that the tip of your tongue is touching the ridge of your upper teeth and the rest of the tongue is hanging in the mouth like a hammock in the garden on a nice summer day.
2. While you're still pronouncing the consonant, raise the body of your tongue and press it against the hard palate. Can you hear how the quality of the consonant has changed? It sounds much "softer" now, doesn't it? That's how you make your consonants soft.

Using Popular Expressions

Using popular expressions is one way to make a great first impression when speaking Russian. We recommend that you memorize the phrases in the following sections because they can come in handy in almost any situation.

Speaking courteously

The way to say "please" and "you're welcome" in Russian is **pozhalujsta** (pah-*zhahl*-stuh). You often use the word **pozhalujsta** just after the verb when making a polite request, as in the following sentences:

- **Povtoritye, pozhalujsta.** (puhf-tah-*ree*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh; Please repeat what you said.)
- **Govoritye, pozhalujsta, pomyedlyennyeye.** (guh-vah-*ree*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh pah-*myed*-lye-nee-ee; Please speak a little more slowly.)
- **Skazhitye, pozhalujsta, kak proiti do myetro?** (skah-*zhih*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh kahk prahy-*tee* duh meet-*roh;* Please tell me how to get to the subway station.)

After somebody answers your polite request or does you a favor, you say **spasibo** (spuh-*see*-buh; thank you) or **spasibo bol'shoye** (spuh-*see*-buh bahl'-*shoy*-ee; thank you very much).

When you want to say "you're welcome," you simply use the word **pozhalujsta** by itself.

Excusing yourself

The most common way to say "excuse me" in Russian is **izvinitye** (eez-vee-*nee*-tee). To be even more polite, you can add the word **pozhalujsta** (pah-*zhahl*-stuh; please), as in the following sentences:

- **Izvinitye, pozhalujsta, mnye pora.** (eez-vee-*nee*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh mnye pah-*rah*; Excuse me, it's time for me to go.)
- **Izvinitye, pozhalujsta, ya vas nye ponimayu.** (eez-vee-*nee*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh yah vahs nee puh-nee-*mah*-yu; Excuse me, I didn't understand what you said.)

Arming yourself with other handy phrases

You can also put the following phrases to good use in Russian:

- **Dobro pozhalovat'!** (dahb-*roh* pah-*zhah*-luh-vuht'; Welcome!)
- **Pozdravlyayu vas!** (puhz-druhv-*la*-yu vahs; Congratulations!)

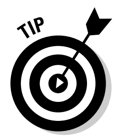
- **Zhyelayu udachi!** (zhih-*lah*-yu oo-*dah*-chee; Good luck!)
- **Nichyego.** (nee-chee-*voh*; It's all right/no problem.)
- **Vsyego khoroshyego!** (vsee-*voh* khah-*roh*-shih-vuh; All the best!)
- **Priyatnogo appyetita!** (pree-*yat*-nuh-vuh uh-pee-*tee*-tuh; Bon appetit!)
- **Zhal'!** (zhahl'; Too bad!)
- **Khorosho.** (khuh-rah-*shoh*; It's all right.)

Reading Russian with Ease

Reading in Russian is an important skill to have. If you want to read a Russian magazine, menu, or train schedule, or if you want find your way around Russian-speaking places, you have to know how to read some Russian.

Suppose that you're walking in the Russian district of an American city and are suddenly in the mood for food. Being able to read Russian is a big help when you see a building with the sign **РЕСТОРАН** (ree-stah-*rahn*) on it. You'll understand that the building is exactly what you're looking for — a restaurant! (We give you the lowdown on talking about food in Chapter 5.)

Or imagine that you booked a trip to Moscow with your favorite travel agent and you've just gotten off the plane. The big sign on the airport building reads **Санкт-Петербрг.** If you know how to read some Russian, you're able to understand that the sign says **Sankt-Peterburg** (sahnk pee-teer-*boork*; St. Petersburg) and not **Москва**/**Moskva** (mahs-*kvah*; Moscow), which means you've come to the wrong place, and it's time to find a new travel agent! (You can find out all about planning a trip to Russia and navigating the airport in Chapters 11 and 12.)



The first step to reading Russian is recognizing Cyrillic letters (see "From A to Ya: Making sense of Cyrillic," earlier in this chapter, for info on these letters). Try sounding out each word, and you may be surprised that you recognize quite a few of them because they're similar to words you know in English or other languages. Then you can look up the ones you're unsure of in the Russian-English dictionary. You don't need to know every word in a sentence to get the sense of what you're reading. At least try to locate and understand the nouns and the verbs, and you'll be off to a good start (see Chapter 2 for info on nouns and verbs).



Fun & Games

Match the Russian letters in the first column with the sounds they correspond to in the second column. You can find the answers in Appendix C.

1. **Н**	a. r
2. **Р**	b. n
3. **Г**	c. ee
4. **Я**	d. ya
5. **И**	e. g

Below are Russian cognates used in English. Sound out each word and see whether you can recognize its meaning. The answers are in Appendix C.

1. **Водка**
2. **Борщ**
3. **Перестройка**
4. **Гласность**
5. **Спутник**
6. **Царь**

Chapter 2

The Nitty Gritty: Basic Russian Grammar and Numbers

In This Chapter

- Understanding the Russian case system
- Using nouns, pronouns, and adjectives
- Forming verbs in different tenses
- Discovering Russian adverbs
- Creating Russian-sounding sentences
- Counting and using numbers in Russian

Grammar is the glue that ties together all the words in a sentence in any language. Not knowing grammar can be very frustrating and sometimes even embarrassing, so getting the basics of Russian grammar down is worth your time. Russian has more grammar than English does, but fortunately it's all very structured, and you can easily learn it if you put in a little effort.

You may be surprised to find out that English and Russian are very distant relatives. Both come from the same ancestor — Sanskrit — and both belong to the same family of Indo-European languages. Although they're distantly related, they have one big difference: Unlike English, Russian is a *flectional language,* which is a fancy way of saying that it has lots of different word endings.

English words don't have too many different flections, or endings. As far as verbs go, you have the -ed ending for past tense verbs (worked) and the -ing ending for some present tense verbs (working). And you also know the singular present verb form -(e)s (goes, walks), and the -er and -est endings for comparative and superlative adjectives (bigger, biggest). And singular nouns don't have any flections at all. A table is a table is a table, no matter how you use it in a sentence.

But in Russian, the same noun can take several different endings! The ending depends on the case of the noun, which is determined by how the noun is

used in the sentence. And a Russian verb in the present tense can take up to six different endings, depending on who the subject of the sentence is.

In this chapter, you find out about cases and the different noun and verb endings. You discover how to spice up your speech with pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs. You also find out how to ask questions and how to form other complete sentences that make you sound like a real Russian. As a bonus, you also discover how to count in Russian and use numbers with nouns.

Making the Russian Cases

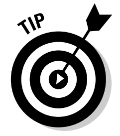


In a Russian sentence, every noun, pronoun, and adjective takes a different ending depending on the case it's in. What's a case? In simple terms, *cases* are sets of endings that words take to indicate their function and relationship to other words in the sentence. If you've studied languages such as Latin or German, you know that different languages have different numbers of cases. Russian has six cases, which isn't that bad compared to Finnish, which has fifteen! English speakers, on the other hand, never have to bother with cases.

In the following sections, you discover the six different cases in Russian and how to use them. (Later in this chapter, we explain the specific endings that nouns, pronouns, and adjectives take in each case.)

Nominative case

A noun (or a pronoun or an adjective) always appears in the nominative case in an English-Russian dictionary. Its main function is to indicate the subject of the sentence.



As a rule, the subject behaves the same way in Russian as it does in English. It answers the question "Who or what is performing the action?"

For example, in the sentence **Bryenda izuchayet russkij yazyk** (*brehn*-duh ee-zoo-*chah*-eet *roos*-keey ee-*zihk*; Brenda studies Russian), the word **Bryenda,** indicating a woman who (like yourself) studies Russian, is the subject of the sentence and consequently is used in the nominative case.

Genitive case

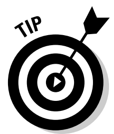
You usually use the genitive case to indicate possession. It answers the question "Whose?" In the phrase **kniga Anny** (*knee*-guh *ah*-nih; Anna's book), **Anna** is in the genitive case (**Anny**) because she's the book's owner.

Genitive case also is used to indicate an absence of somebody or something when you combine it with the word **nyet** (nyet; no/not), as in **Zdyes' nyet knigi** (zdyes' nyet *knee*-gee; There's no book here). **Knigi** (*knee*-gee; book) is in the genitive case because the book's absence is at issue.

Russian uses genitive case after many common prepositions, such as **okolo** (*oh*-kuh-luh; near), **u** (oo; by, by the side of), **mimo** (*mee*-muh; past), **iz** (ees; out of), **vmyesto** (*vmyes*-tuh; instead of), and **byez** (byes; without). For more info on prepositions, see Chapter 15.

Accusative case

The accusative case mainly indicates a direct object, which is the object of the action of the verb in a sentence. For example, in the sentence **Ya lyublyu russkij yazyk** (yah lyu-*blyu roo*-skeey ee-*zihk*; I love Russian), the phrase **russkij yazyk** is in the accusative case because it's the direct object.



Some frequently used verbs like **chitat'** (chee-*taht'*; to read) **vidyet'** (*vee*-deet'; to see), **slushat'** (*sloo*-shuht'; to hear), and **izuchat'** (ee-zoo-*chaht'*; to study) take the accusative case. Like in English, these verbs always take direct objects.

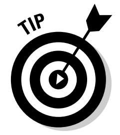
The accusative case is also required in sentences containing verbs of motion, which indicate destination of movement. For instance, if you want to announce to your family that you're going to **Rossiya** (rah-*see*-ye; Russia), **Rossiya** takes the form of the accusative case, which is **Rossiyu** (rah-*see*-yu; Russia). Chapter 12 is full of info on verbs of motion.

You also use the accusative case after certain prepositions, such as **pro** (proh; about) and **chyeryez** (*chye*-rees; through).

Dative case

Use the dative case to indicate an indirect object, which is the person or thing toward whom the action in a sentence is directed. For example, in the sentence **Ya dal uchityelyu sochinyeniye** (yah dahl oo-*chee*-tee-lyu suh-chee-*nye*-nee-ee; I gave the teacher my essay), **uchityelyu** (oo-*chee*-tee-lyu; teacher) is in the dative case because it's the indirect object. ("My essay" acts as the direct object, which we cover in the previous section.)

You also use the dative case after certain prepositions such as **k** (k; toward) and **po** (poh; along).



Some frequently used verbs, such as **pomogat'** (puh-mah-*gaht'*; to help) and **pozvonit'** (puh-zvah-*neet'*; to call), force the nouns that come after them into the dative case. The implication with these verbs in Russian is that you're giving help or making a call *to somebody*, which suggests an indirect receiver of the action of the verb.

Instrumental case

As the name suggests, the instrumental case is often used to indicate the instrument that assists in the carrying out of an action. So, when you say that you're writing a letter with a **ruchka** (*rooch*-kuh; pen), you have to put **ruchka** into the instrumental case, which is **ruchkoj** (*rooch*-kuhy).

Use the instrumental case after certain prepositions such as **s** (s; with), **myezhdu** (*myezh*-doo; between), **nad** (naht; over), **pod** (poht; below), and **pyeryed** (*pye*-reet; in front of). For more information on prepositions, see Chapter 15.

Prepositional case

Prepositional case got its name because it's used only after certain prepositions. Older Russian textbooks often refer to it as the locative case, because it often indicates the location where the action takes place. No wonder it's used with the prepositions **v** (v; in) and **na** (nah; on).

The prepositional case is also used after the prepositions **o** (oh; about) and **ob** (ohb; about). So when you say to that special someone, "I am constantly thinking about you," make sure to put **ty** (tih; you; informal singular) in the prepositional case, which is **tyebye** (tee-*bye*): **Ya postoyanno dumayu o tyebye** (yah puhs-tah-*ya*-nuh *doo*-muh-yu uh tee-*bye*).



By the way, you may wonder why the English preposition "about" is translated by two different Russian equivalents: **o** and **ob.** For your information, **o** is used if the following word begins with a consonant. Use **ob** if the following word begins with a vowel.

Building Your Grammar Base with Nouns and Pronouns

Nouns and pronouns are the building blocks of any sentence. In the following sections, you find out about the three different genders for nouns. You also

discover how to change the ending of nouns and pronouns depending on their function in a sentence and how to form plurals of nouns.

Getting the lowdown on the gender of nouns

A noun can be a person, an animal, a place, a thing, an event (Easter, funeral), an idea (truth, virtue), or even a feeling (envy, love). Unlike English nouns, every Russian noun has what's called a *grammatical gender:* either masculine, feminine, or neuter. All nouns have gender, and not just humans or living beings.



Knowing the grammatical gender of a noun is important, because gender determines how the noun changes for each of the six cases.

In the following sections, we explain how to determine the gender of nouns in Russian and warn you about some tricky-looking nouns.

Which one is it? How to tell the gender of a Russian noun

Determining the gender of a Russian noun is simple and a lot of fun. To truly enjoy determining the gender of a noun, you need to know that it's the ending of a noun that in most cases indicates the noun's gender. In their dictionary form (the nominative case), Russian nouns may end with only one of the following: a consonant; **-j** (an unusual letter — see Chapter 1); the vowels **-a**, **-ya**, **-o**, **-ye**, and **-yo**; or the soft sign (').

To define the gender of a noun, just follow the rules in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Determining the Gender of a Russian Noun

If a Noun in Nominative Case Ends In	*The Noun's Gender Is*
A consonant	Masculine
-j	Masculine
-a or -ya	Feminine
-o, -ye, or -yo	Neuter
Soft sign (')	Either feminine or masculine; look up this word in the dictionary to be sure

Grammatical gender for words denoting living beings, in the majority of cases, coincides with biological gender. The word **mal'chik** (*mahl'*-cheek; boy) is a masculine noun and the word **dyevushka** (*dyeh*-voosh-kuh; girl) is a feminine noun, just as you'd expect.



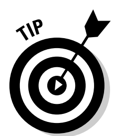
When it comes to inanimate objects, grammatical gender seems to have no relationship to the meaning of the word. The word **dvyer'** (dvyer'; door) is feminine, while **pol** (pohl; floor) is masculine noun. **Okno** (ahk-*noh*; window) is neuter, while **zanavyeska** (zuh-nuh–*vyes*-kuh; curtain) is feminine.



Gender deviants: Masculine nouns that look feminine

A number of common Russian nouns denoting male beings can be confusing, because their grammatical gender is actually feminine. These nouns are considered feminine, because they have the feminine ending **-a**:

- **muzhchina** (moo-*sh'ee*-nuh; man)
- **papa** (*pah*-puh; dad)
- **dyedushka** (*dye*-doosh-kuh; grandfather)
- **dyadya** (*dya*-dye; uncle)



These gender deviants behave just like feminine nouns when their endings change for each of the cases. Memorizing them is a good idea, because they're words you use a lot.

Checking out cases for nouns

Noun declension is when you change the case endings for nouns. Table 2-2 shows you the declension for masculine, feminine, and neuter singular nouns for all the cases. This table shows declension for singular nouns only. For plural noun declension, see the next section.

Table 2-2 Declension of Singular Nouns

If a Noun In Its Dictionary Form (Nominative Case) Ends In	*To Form Genitive*	*To Form Accusative*	*To Form Dative*	*To Form Instrumental*	*To Form Prepositional*
A consonant	Add -a	Add -a if the noun is a living being; otherwise, don't do anything	Add -u	Add -om	Add -ye

If a Noun In Its Dictionary Form (Nominative Case) Ends In	*To Form Genitive*	*To Form Accusative*	*To Form Dative*	*To Form Instrumental*	*To Form Prepositional*
-a	Replace -a with -y	Replace -a with -u	Replace - a with -ye	Replace -a with -oj	Replace -a with -ye
-iye	Replace -iye with -iya	Don't do anything	Replace -iye with -iyu	Replace -iye with -iyem	Replace -iye with -ii
-iya	Replace -iya with -ii	Replace -iya with -iyu	Replace -iya with -ii	Replace -iya with -iyej	Replace -iya with -ii
-j	Replace -j with -ya	Replace -j with -ya if the noun is a living being; otherwise, don't do anything	Replace -j with -yu	Replace -j with -yem	Replace -j with -ye
-o	Replace -o with -a	Don't do anything	Replace -o with -u	Replace -o with -om	Replace -o with -ye
-ye	Replace -e with -ya	Don't do anything	Replace -ye with -yu	Replace -ye with -yem	Don't do anything
-ya	Replace -ya with -i	Replace -ya with -yu	Replace -ya with -ye	Replace -ya with -yej	Replace -ya with -ye
Soft sign (')	If the noun is feminine, replace the soft sign with -i If the noun is masculine, replace the soft sign with -ya	If the noun is feminine, don't do anything If the noun is masculine and a living being, replace the soft sign with -ya; otherwise, don't do anything	If the noun is feminine, replace the soft sign with -i If the noun is masculine, replace the soft sign with -yu	If the noun is feminine, replace the soft sign with -yu If the noun is masculine, replace the soft sign with -yem	If the noun is feminine, replace the soft sign with -i If the noun is masculine, replace the soft sign with -ye



Russian nouns in the nominative case never end in the letters **-i, -u, -y, -e,** or **-yu.** A small number of nouns end in **-yo,** but they're special cases and we deal with them as they come up.

This table may look kind of scary at first, but it's actually easy to use. Imagine you want to brag to your Russian friends about your new car by saying "I bought my friend a car." The first part of the sentence is **ya kupil** (ya koo-*peel*; I bought). But what should you do with the nouns "car" and "friend"? In this sentence, **mashina** (muh-*shih*-nuh; car) is a direct object of the action expressed by the verb **kupil** (koo-*peel*; bought). That means you have to put **mashina** into the accusative case. (For more info on cases, see "Making the Russian Cases" earlier in this chapter.)

The next step is to find the appropriate ending in Table 2-2. You find this ending in the second row, third column. The table says to replace **-a** with **-u.**

Now what about **drug** (drook; friend)? Because "friend" is the indirect object of the sentence (the person to whom or for whom the action of the verb is directed), it takes the dative case in Russian. Table 2-2 indicates that if a noun ends in a consonant (as does **drug**), you form the dative case by adding the letter **-u** to the final consonant. The correct form for **drug** in this sentence is **drugu** (*droog*-oo). So here's your complete sentence: **Ya kupil drugu mashinu** (yah koo-*peel droog*-oo muh-*shih*-noo; I bought my friend a car).

Congratulations! You just created your first Russian sentence!

Putting plurals into their cases

As you probably guessed, Russian plural nouns take different endings depending on the case they're in. In the following sections, you find out about all the different rules for forming the plural. We start with the nominative plural and then look at plural declension for all the other cases.

Forming plurals in the nominative case

Table 2-3 shows you the rules for plural formation in the nominative case.

Table 2-3 Forming the Plural of Nouns in the Nominative Case

If a Noun In Its Dictionary Form (Nominative Case) Ends In	*To Form the Nominative Plural*
A consonant	Add -y
-a	Replace -a with -y
-iye	Replace -iye with -iya

If a Noun In Its Dictionary Form (Nominative Case) Ends In	*To Form the Nominative Plural*
-iya	Replace -iya with -ii
-j	Replace -j with -i
-o	Replace -o with -a
-ye	Replace -ye with -ya
-ya	Replace -ya with -i
Soft sign (‘)	Replace soft sign with -i

Practice using this table. Take the word **komp'yutyer** (kahm-*p'yu*-tehr; computer). If you want to say "computers" in Russian, first ask yourself what the word **komp'yutyer** ends in: the consonant **r.** When you look at the first row and first column of Table 2-3, you see that if a noun ends in a consonant, to form the plural you need to add the letter **y** at the end. So "computers" in Russian is **komp'yutyery** (kahm-*p'yu*-teh-rih).



The rules in Table 2-3 have a few important exceptions. Some consonants, namely **zh, sh, sh', g, k,** and **kh,** are very touchy. They just don't tolerate the letter **y** after them and prefer an **i** instead. Take, for example, the word **kniga** (*knee*-guh; book). According to Table 2-3, **kniga** should replace the final **-a** with **-y** to form its plural**.** But the touchy **g** doesn't tolerate the **-y** ending. It takes an **-i** ending instead. So the plural of **kniga** is **knigi** (*knee*-gee; books).

Changing plurals into the genitive case

Forming the plurals of nouns in the genitive case is a little trickier than in the other cases, so we deal with it first in Table 2-4.

Table 2-4 Forming the Plural of Nouns in the Genitive Case

If a Noun In Its Dictionary Form (Nominative Case) Ends In	*To Form Genitive Plural*
A consonant other than -zh, -sh, -sh', -ch, or -ts	Add -ov: **studyent** (stoo-*dyent*; male student) becomes **studyentov** (stoo-*dyen*-tuhf; male students)
-zh, -sh, -sh', -ch, or soft sign	Add -yej: **klyuch** (klyuch; key) becomes **klyuchyej** (klu-*chyey*; keys)
-ts	Add -yev: **myesyats** (*mye*-seets; month) becomes **myesyatsyev** (*mye*-see-tsehf; months)

(continued)

Table 2-4 *(continued)*

If a Noun In Its Dictionary Form (Nominative Case) Ends In	*To Form Genitive Plural*
-a	Drop the final –a If the resulting genitive plural form has two consonants at the end, the fill vowel -o or -e is often added between the consonants: **sosyedka** (sah-*syed*-kuh; female neighbor) becomes **sosyedok** (sah-*sye*-duhk; female neighbors)
-iye or -iya	Replace -iye or -iya with -ij: **stantsiya** (*stahn*-tsih-ye; station) becomes **stantsij** (*stahn*-tsihy; stations)
-j	Replace the final -j with -yov if the ending is stressed, or with -yev if the ending is not stressed: **popugaj** (puh-poo-*gahy*; parrot) becomes **popugayev** (puh-poo-*gah*-eef; parrots)
-o	Drop the -o: **myesto** (*myes*-tuh; place) becomes **myest** (myest; places)
-ye	Add -j: **morye** (*moh*-ree; sea) becomes **moryej** (mah-*ryey*; seas)
Consonant + -ya	Replace -ya with the soft sign: **nyedyelya** (nee-*dye*-lye; week) becomes **nyedyel'** (nee-*dyel'*, weeks)

Now, try to apply Table 2-4 to a real-life situation. Imagine that your friend asks you whether you have a pencil: **U tyebya yest' karandash?** (oo tee-*bya* yest' kuh-ruhn-*dahsh*; Do you have a pencil?)

You, being by nature a very generous person, say that you have a lot of pencils, meaning that your friend is free to use all of them. It may come as a surprise to you, but when you make this statement, the word **mnogo** (*mnoh*-guh; many/a lot of) requires that the noun used with it take the genitive plural form. In your sentence, the word **karandashi** (kuh-ruhn-duh-*shih;* pencils) should take the form of genitive plural. What does Table 2-4 say about the ending **-sh?** That's right; you need to add the ending **-yej.** You say **U myenya mnogo karandashyej** (oo mee-*nya mnoh*-guh kuh-ruhn-duh-*shyey*; I have many pencils).

Setting plurals into other cases

Table 2-5 shows how to form the plurals of nouns for all the other cases.

Table 2-5 Forming the Plural of Nouns in the Accusative, Dative, Instrumental, and Prepositional Cases

If a Noun In Its Dictionary Form (Nominative Case) Ends In	*To Form Accusative Plural*	*To Form Dative Plural*	*To Form Instrumental Plural*	*To Form Prepositional Plural*
A consonant	If the noun is a living being, it looks just like the genitive plural (see Table 2-4); otherwise, it looks just like the nominative plural (see Table 2-3)	Add -am	Add -ami	Add -akh
-a or -ya	If the noun is a living being, it looks just like the genitive plural (see Table 2-4); otherwise, it looks just like the nominative plural (see Table 2-3)	Add -m	Add -mi	Add -kh
-iye	Replace -iye with -iya, like the nominative plural (see Table 2-3)	Replace -ye with -yam	Replace -iye with -yami	Replace -ye with -yakh
-iya	Replace -iya with -ii, like the nominative plural (see Table 2-3)	Add -m	Add -mi	Add -kh
-j	If the noun is a living being, it looks just like the genitive plural (see Table 2-4); otherwise, it looks just like the nominative plural (see Table 2-3)	Replace -j with -yam	Replace -j with -yem	Replace -j with -yakh
-o	If the noun is a living being, it looks just like the genitive plural (see Table 2-4); otherwise, it looks just like the nominative plural (see Table 2-3)	Replace -o with -am	Replace -o with -ami	Replace -o with –akh
-ye	Replace -ye with -ya, like the nominative plural (see Table 2-3)	Replace -ye with -yam	Add -m	Replace -ye with -yakh
A soft sign (‘)	If the noun is a living being, it looks just like the genitive plural (see Table 2-4); otherwise, it looks just like the nominative plural (see Table 2-3)	Replace the soft sign with -yam	Replace the soft sign with -yami	Replace the soft sign with -yakh

Imagine that you ask your friend, a Russian professor, whether he has a book that you want to borrow. It appears he does, but unfortunately, he can't give it to you because he has already given it to his students. He says **Ya dal knigu studyentam** (ya dahl *knee*-goo stoo-*dyen*-tuhm; I gave the book to the students).

Why did your friend use the form **studyentam?** It's the plural dative form of the word **studyenty** (stoo-*dyen*-tih; students), the indirect object of the sentence. The singular nominative form of this word is **studyent** (stoo-*dyent*), and he just added **-am** as shown in Table 2-5.

Picking out pronouns

Pronouns are words like *he*, *she*, and *it.* They're used in place of nouns to refer to someone or something that's already been mentioned. In the following sections, we show you the basic pronouns in Russian and how to place them into the correct cases. We also give you the scoop on possessive and interrogative pronouns.



Recognizing basic pronouns

Major Russian pronouns include the following:

- **ya** (ya; I)
- **ty** (tih; you; informal singular)
- **on** (ohn; he)
- **ona** (ah-*nah*; she)
- **my** (mih; we)
- **vy** (vih; you; formal singular and plural)



So what about "it"? In English, inanimate objects are usually referred to with the pronoun *it,* but in Russian, an inanimate object is always referred to with the pronoun corresponding to its grammatical gender. (For more about noun gender, see "Getting the lowdown on the gender of nouns" earlier in this chapter.) You translate the English pronoun *it* into Russian with one of these pronouns:

- **on** (ohn) if the noun it refers to is masculine
- **ona** (ah-*nah*) if the noun it refers to is feminine
- **ono** (ah-*noh*) if the noun it refers to is neuter
- **oni** (ah-*nee*) if the noun it refers to is plural

For example, in the phrase **Eto moya mashina. Ona staraya** (*eh*-tuh mah-*ya* muh-*shih*-nuh ah-*nah stah*-ruh-ye; That's my car. It's old), the pronoun *it* is translated as **ona,** because it refers to the Russian feminine noun **mashina.**

Placing basic pronouns into cases

Like nouns, Russian pronouns have different forms for all the cases. Table 2-6 shows the declension for pronouns.

Table 2-6 Declension of Russian Pronouns

Pronoun in the Nominative Case	*Genitive*	*Accusative*	*Dative*	*Instrumental*	*Prepositional*
ya (ya; I)	myenya (mee-*nya*; me)	myenya (mee-*nya*; me)	mnye (mnye; me)	mnoj (mnohy; me)	mnye (mnye; me)
ty (tih; you informal singular)	tyebya (tee-*bya*; you)	tyebya (tee-*bya*; you)	tyebye (tee-*bye*; you)	toboj (tah-*bohy*; you)	tyebye (tee-*bye*; you)
on (ohn; he or it)	(n)yego ((n)ee-*voh*; him/it)	(n)yego ((n) ee-*voh*; him/it)	(n)yemu ((n) ee-*moo*; him/it)	(n)im ((n)eem; him/it)	nyom (nyom; him/it)
ona (ah-*nah*; she or it)	(n)yeyo ((n) ee-*yoh*; her/it)	(n)yeyo ((n)ee-yoh; her/it)	(n)yej ((n)yey; her/it)	(n)yej ((n)yey; her/it)	nej (nyey; her/it)
ono (ah-*noh*; it)	ono (ah-*noh*; it)	ono (ah-*noh*; it)	(n)emu ((n) ee-*moo*; it)	(n)im ((n)eem; it)	(n)im ((n)eem; it)
my (mih; we)	nas (nahs; us)	nas (nahs; us)	nam (nahm; us)	nami (*nah*-mee; us)	nas (nahs; us)
vy (vih; you formal singular and plural)	vas (vahs; you)	vas (vahs; you)	vam (vahm; you)	vami (*vah*-mee; you)	vas (vahs; you)
oni (ah-*nee*; they)	(n)ikh ((n)eekh; them)	(n)ikh ((n)eekh; them)	(n)im ((n)eem; them)	(n)imi ((*n)ee*-mee; them)	nikh ((n)eekh; them)

Imagine that somebody asks you if you saw Nina today: **Ty vidyel Ninu?** (tih *vee*-deel *nee*-noo; Did you see Nina?) You didn't. In preparing to answer this question, you may decide not to use the word "Nina" again but to replace it with the pronoun "her." Because "Nina" is a direct object, you have to use the accusative case in translating the word "her." Using Table 2-6, you discover that accusative case of **ona** (ah-*nah*; she) is **yeyo** (ee-*yo*; her). You respond **Ya yeyo nye vidyel.** (ya ee-*yo* nee *vee*-deel; I didn't see her.)



You add the letter **n** to the beginning of pronouns whose first letter is a vowel when the pronoun is used right after a preposition. Refer to Table 2-6 for the pronouns that do this.

Surveying possessive pronouns

Possessive pronouns indicate ownership or possession. Words like *my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, our, ours, their*, and *theirs* are English possessive pronouns. In Russian, a possessive pronoun must always agree in number, gender, and case with the noun it's referring to. Table 2-7 shows you how to form the possessive pronouns in the nominative case, which is by far the case you'll use most.

Table 2-7 Forming Possessive Pronouns in the Nominative Case

English Possessive Pronoun	*When It Modifies a Masculine Noun*	*When It Modifies a Feminine Noun*	*When It Modifies a Neuter Noun*	*When It Modifies a Plural Noun (All Genders)*
My/mine	moj (mohy)	moya (mah-*ya*)	moyo (mah-*yo*)	moi (mah-*ee*)
Your/yours (informal singular)	tvoj (tvohy)	tvoya (tvah-*ya*)	tvoyo (tvah-*yo*)	tvoi (tvah-*ee*)
His	yego (ee-*voh*)	yego (ee-*voh*)	yego (ee-*voh*)	yego (ee-*voh*)
Her/hers	yeyo (ee-*yo*)	yeyo (ee-*yo*)	yeyo (ee-*yo*)	yeyo (ee-*yo*)
Our/ours	nash (nahsh)	nasha (*nah*-shuh)	nashye (*nah*-sheh)	nashi (*nah*-shih)
Your/yours (formal singular and plural)	vash (vahsh)	vasha (*vah*-shuh)	vashye (*vah*-sheh)	vashi (*vah*-shih)
Their/theirs	ikh (eekh)	ikh (eekh)	ikh (eekh)	ikh (eekh)

Say you're getting ready to go out on the town and you notice you lost your favorite shirt. You want to say, "Where's my shirt?" Because **rubashka** (*roo-bahsh*-kuh; shirt) ends in **-a,** it's a feminine noun. (For information on determining a noun's gender, see "Which one is it? How to tell the gender of a Russian noun" earlier in this chapter.) Because *my* modifies the feminine noun **rubashka,** it's written **moya** (mah-*ya*; my) according to Table 2-7. The phrase you want is **Gdye moya rubashka?** (gdye mah-*ya* roo-*bahsh*-kuh; Where's my shirt?)

Now say you can't find your tie either. You want to ask, **Gdye moj galstuk?** (gdye mohy *gahl*-stook; Where's my tie?) Notice how *my* is now written **moj** (moy), because in this sentence, it modifies the masculine noun **galstuk.**



A possessive pronoun changes its endings in all the cases. Its declension is totally dependent on the way the noun it is attached to declines. So the phrase **moya kniga** (mah-*ya knee*-guh; my book) declines differently from the phrase **moj tyelyefon** (moy tee-lee-*fohn*; my telephone) for one simple reason: **Kniga** is a feminine noun and **tyelyefon** is a masculine noun.

Investigating interrogative pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are question words like *who, whose,* and *which.* "Who" in Russian is **kto** (ktoh), and you're likely to hear or use this word in phrases like

- **Kto eto?** (ktoh *eh*-tuh; Who is that?)
- **Kto on?** (ktoh ohn; Who is he?)
- **Kto vy?** (ktoh vih; Who are you?)



Kto changes its form depending on the case it's in. It becomes **kogo** (kah-*voh*; whom) in the genitive case, **kogo** (kah-*voh*; whom) in the accusative case, **kom** (kohm; whom) in the dative case, **kyem** (kyem; whom) in the instrumental case, and **kom** (kohm; whom) in the prepositional case. But you hear and use the basic nominative case form **kto** in most situations. And just as in English, you use **kto** no matter what the gender of the noun is.

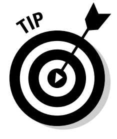
"Whose" in Russian is **chyej** (chyey), and "which" is **kakoj** (kuh-*kohy*). **Chyej** and **kakoj** change their endings depending on the gender, number, and case of the noun they modify. For now, you just need to know the nominative case endings in Table 2-8.

Table 2-8 Nominative Case Endings for Chyej (Whose) and Kakoj (Which)

Interrogative Pronoun	*When It Modifies a Masculine Noun*	*When It Modifies a Feminine Noun*	*When It Modifies a Neuter Noun*	*When It Modifies a Plural Noun*
chyej (chyey; whose)	chyej (chyey)	ch'ya (ch'ya)	ch'yo (ch'yo)	ch'i (ch'yee)
kakoj (kuh-*kohy*; which)	kakoj (kuh-*kohy*)	kakaya (kuh-*kah*-ye)	kakoye (kuh-*koh*-ee)	kakiye (kuh-*kee*-ee)

Here are examples of some phrases you may hear or say using the interrogative pronouns **chyej** and **kakoj:**

- **Chyej eto dom?** (chyey *eh*-tuh dohm; Whose house is that?) **Dom** (house) is masculine, so you use **chyej.**
- **Ch'ya eta kniga?** (ch'ya *eh*-tuh *knee*-guh; Whose book is that?) **Kniga** (book) is feminine, so you use **ch'ya.**
- **Kakoj magazin ty pryedpochitayesh'?** (kuh-*kohy* muh-guh-*zeen* tih preed-puh-chee-*tah*-eesh'; Which store do you prefer?) **Magazin** (store) is masculine, so you use **kakoj.**
- **Kakoye blyudo ty pryedpochitayesh'?** (kuh-*koh*-ee *blyu*-duh tih preed-puh-chee-*tah*-eesh'; Which dish do you prefer?) **Blyudo** (dish) is neuter, so you use **kakoye.**



The question words **kogda** (kahg-*dah*; when), **gdye** (gdye; where), and **chto** (shtoh; what) are also sometimes used as interrogative pronouns. The good news is that **kogda** and **gdye** never change their form. **Chto** changes its form for all cases.

Decorating Your Speech with Adjectives

Adjectives spice up your speech. An adjective is a word that describes, or modifies, a noun or a pronoun, like *good, nice, difficult,* or *hard.* In the following sections, you discover how to use adjectives, how to change their endings for different cases, and what to do about the articles "the" and "a."

Always consenting: Adjective-noun agreement

A Russian adjective is like a jealous lover. It can't live without the noun or the pronoun it describes. In English, an adjective never changes its form no matter what word it modifies or where it's used in a sentence, but a Russian adjective always agrees with the noun or pronoun it modifies in gender, number, and case. Table 2-9 shows how to change adjective endings in the nominative case, which is the case you're likely to see and use the most.

Table 2-9 Adjective Formation in the Nominative Case

If an Adjective Modifies	*The Adjective Takes the Ending*	*Examples*
A masculine noun/pronoun	-oj//ij/yj	**bol'shoj myach** (bahl'-*shohy* myach; big ball) **sinij pidzhak** (*see*-neey peed-*zhahk*; blue jacket) **krasivyj mal'chik** (kruh-*see*-vihy *mahl'*-cheek; beautiful boy)
A feminine noun/pronoun	-aya/yaya	**bol'shaya kniga** (bahl'-*shah*-ye *knee*-guh; big book) **sinyaya shuba** (*see*-nee-ye *shoo*-buh; blue fur coat) **krasivaya rubashka** (krah-*see*-vuh-ye roo-*bahsh*-kuh; beautiful shirt)
A neuter noun	-oye/yeye	**bol'shoye zhivotnoye** (bahl'-*shoh*-ee zhih-*voht*-nuh-ee; big animal) **sinyeye okno** (*see*-nee-ee ahk-*noh*; blue window) **krasivoye myesto** (krah-*see*-vuh-ee *myes*-tuh; beautiful place)
A plural noun	-yye/iye	**bol'shyye zhivotnyye** (bahl'-*shih*-ee zhee-*voht*-nih-ee; big animals) **siniye okna** (*see*-nee-ee *ohk*-nuh; blue windows) **krasivyye myesta** (krah-*see*-vih-ee mees-*tah*; beautiful places)

Dictionaries list adjectives in their singular and masculine form (the first row in Table 2-9). The trick is correctly selecting the ending for the adjectives' feminine, neuter, and plural forms; dictionaries don't provide these forms because dictionary compilers assume that you know how to do it. You're not on your own; we're going to provide you with some general rules:

- If an adjective in its masculine form ends in **-oj/-yj:**
  - Replace the original ending with **-aya** to make it feminine
  - Replace the original ending with **-oye** to make it neuter
  - Replace the original ending with **-yye** to make it plural
- If an adjective in its masculine form ends in **-ij:**
  - Replace the original ending with **-yaya** to make it feminine
  - Replace its original ending with **-yeye** to make it neuter
  - Replace the original ending with **-iye** to make it plural

Now put the rule to work. Take the word **poslyednij** (pahs-*lyed*-neey; last). As you see, in its dictionary (singular and masculine) form, the adjective has the ending **-ij.** How are we going to change the ending of this adjective to say "the last word" in Russian?

Figure out the gender of the word "word" (sorry!). Its Russian equivalent is **slovo** (*sloh*-vuh; word). The ending in this word is **-o.** The ending **-o** in a noun indicates neuter gender (refer to Table 2-1). What ending does **poslyednij** take when it's used with a neuter noun? Yes, the ending is **-yeye.** So "the last word" in Russian is **poslyednyeye slovo** (pahs-*lyed*-nee-ee *sloh*-vuh).

A lot in common: Putting adjectives into other cases

Table 2-10 shows how to change adjective endings for all the cases other than nominative. (Work with Table 2-9 to figure out which particular ending to use in each case.) Notice how masculine and neuter nouns take the same endings in the genitive, dative, instrumental, and prepositional cases. The feminine endings are the same for all cases except accusative. And the plural genitive and plural prepositional endings are the same.

Table 2-10 Adjective Declension in the Genitive, Accusative, Instrumental, and Prepositional Cases

If the Adjective Modifies	*To Form Genitive*	*To Form Accusative*	*To Form Dative*	*To Form Instrumental*	*To Form Prepositional*
A masculine noun	Replace -oj/ij/yj with -ogo/yego/ogo	If the noun is a living being, it looks just like the genitive; otherwise, it looks just like the nominative (see Table 2-9)	Replace -oj/ij/yj with -omu/yemu/omu	Replace -oj/ij/yj with -ym/im/ym	Replace -oj/ij/yj with -om/im/om
A feminine noun	Replace -aya/yaya with -oj/yej/oj	Replace -aya/yaya with -uyu/yuyu/uyu	Replace -aya/yaya with -oj/yej/oj	Replace -aya/yaya with -oj/yej/oj	Replace -aya/yaya with -oj/yej/oj
A neuter noun	Replace -oye/yeye with -ogo/yego	It looks just like the nominative (see Table 2-9)	Replace -oj/ij/yj with -omu/yemu/omu	Replace -oj/ij/yj with -ym/im/ym	Replace -oj/ij/yj with -om/im/om
A plural noun	Replace -yye/iye with -ykh/ikh	If the noun is a living being it looks just like the genitive; otherwise it looks just like the nominative (see Table 2-9)	Replace -yye/iye with -ym/im	Replace -yye/iye with -ymi/imi	Replace -yye/iye with -ykh/ikh/

Nowhere to be found: The lack of articles in Russian



The English words *the, a,* and *an* are called articles. You use articles all the time in English, but these words don't exist in Russian, so you don't need to worry about how to say them. When you want to say *the, a,* or *an,* all you have to do is say the noun you mean. "The store" and "a store" in Russian are simply **magazin** (muh-guh-*zeen*; *Literally:* store). "The girl" and "a girl" are simply **dyevushka** (*dyeh*-voosh-kuh; *Literally:* girl).

Adding Action with Verbs



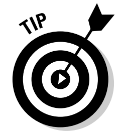
If nouns and pronouns are the building blocks and adjectives the flavoring in a Russian sentence, then the verb is the engine. Without the verb, you can't express a complete thought. A Russian verb carries loads of important information. It can reveal whether an action was completed or resulted in something and whether the action occurs on a regular basis or is a one-time event. Russian verbs also reveal the number (and, in the past tense, the gender) of the person or thing performing the action.

In the following sections, we show you how to spot the infinitive of a verb, and how to form verbs in the past, present, and future tenses. We also tell you about a basic but unusual verb often used in Russian.

Spotting infinitives

Spotting Russian infinitives is easy, because they usually end in a **-t'** as in **chitat'** (chee-*taht'*; to read), **govorit'** (guh-vah-*reet'*; to speak), and **vidyet'** (*veed*-yet'; to see).

Some Russian verbs (which are usually irregular) take the infinitive endings **-ti** as in **idti** (ee-*tee*; to walk) and **-ch'** as in **moch'** (mohch'; to be able to). For a list of common irregular verbs, see Appendix A.



In a Russian dictionary, as in any language dictionary, verbs are always listed in their infinitive form. Why? Well, imagine a dictionary that lists all verb forms. It probably would be a dictionary the size of the Kremlin.

Living in the present tense

Russian verbs have only one present tense. Like English verbs, Russian verbs conjugate (change their form) so that they always agree in person and number with the subject of the sentence. To conjugate most Russian verbs in the present tense, you drop the infinitive ending **-t'** and replace it with one of the six endings in Table 2-11.

Table 2-11 Forming the Present Tense of Verbs

Subject of Sentence	*Drop the Infinitive Verb Ending (-t') and Replace It With*	*Example*
ya (ya; I)	-yu	ya rabotayu (ya ruh-*boh*-tuh-yu; I work/am working)
ty (tih; you; informal singular)	-yesh'	ty rabotayesh' (tih ruh-*boh*-tuh-eesh'; You work/are working)
on/ona/ono (ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh*; he/she/it)	-yet	on rabotayet (ohn ruh-*boh*-tuh-eet; He works/is working)
my (mih; we)	-yem	my rabotayem (mih ruh-*boh*-tuh-eem; We work/are working)
vy (vih; you; formal singular and plural)	-yetye	vy rabotayetye (vih ruh-*boh*-tuh-ee-tee; You work/are working)
oni (ah-*nee*; they)	-yut	oni rabotayut (ah-*nee* ruh-*boh*-tuh-yut; They work/are working)



The present tense in Russian corresponds to both the present simple and present continuous tenses in English; in other words, it denotes both the general action in the present tense (such as "I work") and the action taking place at the moment of speaking (such as "I am working").



Verbs that conjugate as **-yu, -yesh', -yet, -yem, -yetye,** and **-yut** are called first-conjugation verbs. The term in itself implies that second-conjugation verbs exist; they conjugate as **-yu, -ish', -it, -im, -itye,** and **-yat.** So how do you know whether the verb is the first or second conjugation? Easy: Dictionaries always indicate this situation. In addition, a lot of verbs conjugate — how should we

put it? — in whatever way they want to conjugate (in other words, in a completely unpredictable fashion!). How do you deal with such verbs? Always check with the dictionary; dictionaries always indicate something peculiar in verb conjugations. However, they don't list all the forms but only three of them, usually the **ya** (I), **ty** (you; informal singular), and **oni** (they) forms with the hope that you can figure out the rest of the forms.

We alert you to regular verbs that follow the second-conjugation pattern and irregular verbs with conjugation peculiarities throughout this book.

Talking about the past tense

In the following sections, we show you how to form the past tense of Russian verbs and explain the differences between imperfective and perfective verbs.

Keep it simple: Forming the past tense

To form the past tense of a Russian verb, all you need to do is drop the infinitive ending **-t'** and replace it with one of four endings in Table 2-12.

Table 2-12 Forming the Past Tense of Verbs

If the Subject of the Sentence Is	*Drop the Infinitive Ending -t' and Replace It With*	*Example*
Masculine singular	-l	on rabotal (ohn ruh-*boh*-tuhl; He worked)
Feminine singular	-la	ona rabotala (ah-nah ruh-*boh*-tuh-luh; She worked)
Neuter singular	-lo	ono rabotalo (ah-noh ruh-*boh*-tuh-luh; It worked)
Plural	-li	oni rabotali (ah-*nee* ruh-*boh*-tuh-lee; They worked)

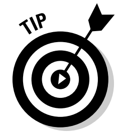
Perfective or imperfective? That is the question

English expresses past events either through the past simple tense (I ate yesterday) or the present perfect tense (I have eaten already). While *I ate yesterday* simply states a fact, *I have eaten already* emphasizes the result of the action. Russian verbs do something similar by using what's called *verbal aspect.* Two aspects exist in Russian: perfective and imperfective.

Up to this point, we've been withholding some very essential information from you: Every English verb in the English-Russian dictionary is represented by two Russian verbs, its imperfective equivalent and a perfective counterpart. Usually, the imperfective is listed first in the aspectual pair, like in this example:

To read — **chitat'** (chee-*taht'*)/**prochitat'** (pruh-chee-*taht'*)

In this example, **chitat'** is the imperfective infinitive, and **prochitat'** is the perfective infinitive. You form the perfective aspect by adding the prefix **pro-** to the imperfective infinitive. Don't assume, however, that you add **pro-** to every Russian imperfective verb to find its perfective aspect. It's not that simple. Sometimes the perfective aspect of a verb looks quite different from the imperfective aspect, as in the case of the verb "to look/to glance": **glyadyet'** (glee-*dyet'*) and **glyanut'** (*glee*-noot'). **Glyadyet'** is the imperfective infinitive and **glyanut'** is the perfective infinitive.



The formation of the perfective infinitive is as unpredictable as the rest of Russian grammar. Our advice: When you memorize a new Russian verb, memorize both its imperfective and perfective aspects.



To emphasize the fact of an action in the past or to express habitual or repeated action in the past, Russian uses the imperfective aspect form of the verb. To emphasize the result or completion of the action, Russian uses the perfective aspect of the verb. You also use the perfective aspect of a verb if you want to emphasize a single, momentary event that took place in the past, such as breaking a plate.

If you tell someone **Ya pisal ryezyumye tsyelyj dyen'** (ya pee-*sahl* ree-zyu-*meh tseh* -lihy dyen'; I was writing my resume all day), you use the past tense imperfective form of the verb **pisat',** because your emphasis is on the fact of writing, not on the completion of the task. If you finished writing your resume, you use the past tense perfective form of the verb, because your emphasis is on the completion of the action: **Ya napisal ryesyumye.** (ya nuh-pee-*sahl* ree-zyu-*mye;* I have written my resume.)



Knowing which of the two aspects to select is important only when you speak about the past or the future (see the next section). Russian doesn't have aspects in the present tense. In other words, in describing present tense events, you can use only the imperfective form of the verb. Don't even think about using perfective form in the present tense!

Talkin' the Talk



Viktor and Marina are former co-workers. They meet after a long absence.

Viktor: **Privyet Marina, chto novogo? Kuda vy propali?**
pree-*vyet* mah-*ree*-nuh, shtoh *noh*-vuh-vuh? koo-*dah* vih prah-*pah*-lee?
Hi Marina, what's new? Where've you disappeared to?

Marina: **Privyet, Viktor! Ya nyeskol'ko myesyatsyev otdykhala, a potom nachala rabotat' v shklolye.**
Pree-*vyet, veek*-tuhr! ya *nyes*-kuhl'-kuhl' *mye*-see-tsehf uh-dih-*khah*-luh, ah pah-*tohm* nuh-chuh-*lah* rah-*boh*-tuht' f *shkoh*-lee.
Hi Viktor! I relaxed for several months, and then I started to work at a school.

Viktor: **Oj kak intyeryesno! Ya tozhye rabotal odnazhdy v shkolye. Kak vam eto nravitsya?**
Ohy kahk een-tee-*ryes*-nuh! ya *toh*-zheh rah-*boh*-tuhl ahd-*nahzh*-dih f *shkoh*-lee. kahk vahm *eh*-tuh *nrah*-veet-sye?
Oh, how interesting! I also worked once at a school. How do you like it?

Marina: **Nichyego, no ya predpochitayu otdykhat'.**
Nee-chee-*voh,* noh ya preet-puh-chee-*tah*-yu uh-dih-*khaht'.*
Not bad, but I prefer to relax.

Viktor: **Soglasyen, no k sozhalyeniyu nado rabotat'.**
sah-*glah*-seen, noh k suh-zhah-*lye*-nee-yu *nah*-duh ruh-*boh*-tuht'.
I agree, but unfortunately one has to work.

Words to Know

Chto novogo?	shtoh noh-vuh-vuh	What's new?
Kuda vy propali?	koo-dah vih prah-pah-lee	Where've you disappeared to?
otdykhala	uh-dih-khah-luh	relaxed (feminine, singular)
nyeskol'ko myesyetsev	nyes-kuhl'-kuh mye-see-tsehf	for several months
rabotat'	ruh-boh-tuht'	to work (imperfective)
rabotal	ruh-boh-tuhl	worked (masculine, singular)
odnazhdy	ahd-nahzh-dih	once/at one time
Kak vam nravitsya?	kahk vahm eh-tuh nrah-veet-sye	How do you like it?
Ya predpochitayu . . .	yah preet-puh-chee-tah-yu	I prefer to . . . (+ infinitive)
k sozhalyeniyu	k suh-zhah-lye-nee-yu	unfortunately

Planning for the future tense

To describe an action that will take place in the future, Russian uses the future tense. While English has many different ways to talk about the future, Russian has only two: the *future imperfective* and the *future perfective.*



You use the future imperfective when you want to emphasize the fact that something will happen or be happening in the future, but you don't necessarily want to emphasize the result or completion of an action. You use the future perfective to emphasize result or completion of an action.



To form the future imperfective, you use the future tense form of the verb **byt'** (biht'; to be) plus the imperfective infinitive. This combination translates into "will/will be." Table 2-13 shows the conjugation of the verb **byt'** in the future tense. (Find out more about this interesting verb in the next section.)

Table 2-13 Conjugation of Byt' in the Future Tense

Pronoun	*Correct Form of Byt'*
ya (I)	budu (*boo*-doo)
ty (you; informal singular)	budyesh' (*boo*-deesh')
on/ona/ono (he/she/it)	budyet (*boo*-deet)
my (we)	budyem (*boo*-deem)
vy (you; formal singular and plural)	budyetye (*boo*-dee-tee)
oni (they)	budut (*boo*-doot)

If you want to say "I will read (but not necessarily finish reading) the article," you use the **ya** (I) form of the verb **byt'** plus the imperfective infinitive **chitat'** (chee-*taht'*; to read): **Ya budu chitat' stat'yu** (ya *boo*-doo chee-*taht'* staht'-*yu*).



To form the future perfective, you simply conjugate the perfective form of the verb, as in **Ya prochitayu stat'yu syegodnya** (ya pruh-chee-*tah*-yu staht'-*yu* see-*vohd*-nye; I'll read/finish reading the article today). In other words, you use the ending **-yu** for **ya** (I) as you do in the present tense. See the previous section for more about perfective verbs.

Using the unusual verb byt' (to be)



Russian has no present tense of the verb *to be.* To say "I'm happy," you just say **Ya schastliv** (ya *sh'as*-leef; *Literally:* I happy). To say "That's John," you just say **Eto Dzhon** (*eh*-tuh dzhohn; *Literally:* That John). The being verbs *am, are,* and *is* are implicitly understood in the present tense.

To express the verb *to be* in the past tense, you need to use the proper past tense form of the verb **byt':**

- **byl** (bihl; was) if the subject is a masculine singular noun
- **byla** (bih-*lah*; was) if the subject is a feminine singular noun
- **bylo** (*bih*-luh; was) if the subject is a neuter singular noun
- **byli** (*bih*-lee; was) if the subject is a plural noun or if the subject is **vy** (vih; you; formal singular)

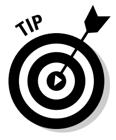
To express the verb *to be* in the future tense, you have to use the correct form of the verb **byt'** in the future tense. (For conjugation, refer to Table 2-13.) To say "I will be happy," you say **Ya budu schastliv** (ya *boo*-doo *sh'as*-leef), and for "I will be there," you say **Ya budu tam** (ya *boo*-doo tahm).

Providing Extra Details with Adverbs

Adverbs are words like *very, quickly,* and *beautifully.* They add information to a verb, an adjective, or even another adverb. Russian adverbs are one of the most uncomplicated parts of speech. Unlike nouns, verbs, and adjectives, adverbs never change their form. In the following sections, you discover the main categories of Russian adverbs: adverbs of manner and adverbs of time.

Describing how

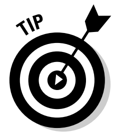
You use some adverbs to describe *how* an action is performed. These adverbs are called *adverbs of manner,* and they're easy to spot because they usually end in **-o.** In fact, you can consider the ending **-o** as a kind of equivalent of the ending **-ly** in English adverbs.



Some adverbs of manner you probably hear and use a lot are **khorosho** (khuh-rah-*shoh*; well), **plokho** (*ploh*-khuh; poorly), **pravil'no** (*prah*-veel'-nuh; correctly), **nyepravil'no** (nee- *prah*-veel'-nuh; incorrectly), **bystro** (*bihs*-truh; quickly), **myedlyenno** (*myed*-lee-nuh; slowly), **lyegko** (leekh-*koh*; easily), and **prosto** (*proh*-stuh; simply).

Describing when and how often

To describe when and how often the action took place, Russian uses *time adverbs.* Like adverbs of manner, time adverbs are recognizable because they usually end in **-o** (and sometimes in **-a**).



Some of the most common time adverbs are **chasto** (*chahs*-tuh; often), **ryedko** (*ryed*-kuh; rarely), **inogda** (ee-nahg-*dah*; sometimes), **nikogda** (nee-kahg-*dah*; never), **vsyegda** (fseeg-*dah*; always), **skoro** (*skoh*-ruh; soon), **obychno** (ah-*bihch*-nuh; usually), **rano** (*rah*-nuh; early), **pozdno** (*pohz*-nuh; late), and **dolgo** (*dohl*-guh; for a long time).

Constructing Sentences Like a Pro

The whole point of learning grammar is to actually create Russian-sounding sentences. In the following sections, you discover how to do just that. You have a lot of freedom of word order when creating Russian sentences. You get tips on selecting the noun or pronoun, adjectives, and verb, and you see how to connect different parts of a sentence with conjunctions. You also find out how to form questions in Russian.

Enjoying the freedom of word order

One of the biggest differences between English and Russian is that English tends to have a fixed order of words, whereas Russian enjoys a free order of words.

In English, word order can often determine the meaning of a sentence. For example, in English you say, "The doctor operated on the patient," but you never say "The patient operated on the doctor." It just doesn't make sense.

In Russian, however, it's perfectly okay to put **patsiyenta** at the beginning of the sentence and **doktor** at the end, as in **Patsiyenta opyeriroval doktor** (puh-tsee-*yent*-uh uh-pee-*ree*-ruh-vuhl *dohk*-tuhr). It still means "The doctor operated on the patient" even though it looks like "The patient operated on the doctor." If you wanted to, you could even put **opyeriroval** first, **patsiyenta** second, and **doktor** at the end, as in **Opyeriroval patsiyenta doktor.** It still means "The doctor operated on the patient" even though it looks like "Operated on the patient the doctor."



In Russian, you can freely shift around the order of words in a sentence, because the Russian case system tells you exactly what role each word plays in the sentence. (For additional information on cases, see "Making the Russian Cases" earlier in this chapter.)



As a rule, you give new information or information you want to emphasize at the end of a Russian sentence and the least important information at the beginning of a Russian sentence.

Selecting the noun (or pronoun) and adjective



Usually, the first step in forming a sentence is deciding on which nouns and adjectives to use. If you want to say "I'm reading an interesting article," the first thing you need to decide is what role each of the nouns and pronouns plays in the sentence, so you can decide which case to put them into. In this sentence, "I" is the subject and "interesting article" is the direct object.

The subject of a sentence is always in the nominative case, and the direct object is always in the accusative case. The nominative case for the pronoun "I" is **ya,** and now we have to put **intyeryesnaya stat'ya** (een-tee-*ryes*-nuh-ye staht'-*ya*; interesting article) into the accusative case. (For details on cases, see "Making the Russian Cases" earlier in this chapter.)

Start with the feminine noun, **stat'ya.** Table 2-2 says that if a noun ends in **-ya,** then you form the accusative case by replacing **-ya** with **-yu,** so now you have **stat'yu.** And as for the adjective **intyeryesnaya,** it must agree in gender, case, and number with the noun it modifies. The dictionary form of "interesting" in Russian is **intyeryesnyj.** From Table 2-10 you know that this adjective takes the ending **-uyu** when it modifies a feminine noun in the accusative case. Presto! You now have **intyeryesnuyu.** (See "Decorating Your Speech with Adjectives" earlier in this chapter for more information.)

Choosing the verb



After you decide on the verb and tense you want to use in your sentence, you just need to make sure it agrees in number (and in gender if it's in the past tense) with the subject of the sentence. (For more, see "Adding Action with Verbs" earlier in this chapter.)

In the sentence "I'm reading an interesting article," the verb is obviously in the present tense and agrees with the singular pronoun "I." Table 2-11 in the section "Living in the present tense" earlier in this chapter says that you form the first person singular present tense verb by replacing the infinitive ending **-t'** with **-yu.** So the verb form you want is **chitayu** from the infinitive **chitat'.** The whole sentence is **Ya chitayu intyeryesnuyu stat'yu** (ya chee-*tah*-yu een-tee-*ryes*-noo-yu staht'-*yu*; I'm reading an interesting article). Congratulations! You've just created a complete Russian sentence!

Connecting with conjunctions

Sometimes you may want to connect words or phrases in a sentence with conjunctions, which are words like *and*, *but*, and *however.* "And" in Russian is **i** (ee), "but" is **a** (ah), and "however" is **no** (noh).

Forming questions

Forming questions in Russian is easy. You simply begin your sentence with a question word like **kto** (ktoh; who), **chto** (shtoh; what), **gdye** (gdye; where), **kogda** (kahg-*dah*; when), **pochyemu** (puh-chee-*moo*; why), or **kak** (kahk; how). And then you form your sentence as if you were making a statement.

For example, a man you know makes an exciting statement: **Ya syegodnya nye zavtrakal** (ya see-*vohd*-nye nee *zahf*-truh-kuhl; I didn't have breakfast today). Being a polite person, you need to somehow respond to this news. You may ask why your interlocutor didn't have breakfast. That'll demonstrate to him that you listened carefully to what he had to say. You ask:

> **Pochyemu ty syegodnya nye zavtrakal?** (puh-chee-*moo* tih see-*vohd*-nye nee *zahf*-truh-kuhl; Why didn't you have breakfast today?)

That's how simple it is! No auxiliary verbs, no changing the verb back to its infinitive form as you have to do in English! Asking questions is so much easier in Russian than in English, isn't it?



In Russian, you don't have to invert the subject and the verb when you're forming questions.

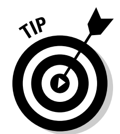
Counting in Russian

You're probably not going to need to know numbers beyond talking about how many siblings you have (which we explain in Chapter 4), telling time (which we talk about in Chapter 7), or counting your money (which we talk about in Chapter 14). But just in case, knowing the numbers in the following sections should help you with all other possible counting needs.



The harsh truth is that each Russian number changes its form for all six cases! But unless you plan to spend a lot of time at mathematics or accounting conferences conducted in Russian, you won't find yourself in many practical situations in which you need to know all the different forms. So we give you all the numbers you need to know only in the nominative case.

Numbers 0–9



These are the numbers you'll probably use most often when counting groceries, siblings, friends, and other people and things around the house:

- **0 nol'** (nohl')
- **1 odin** (ah-*deen*)
- **2 dva** (dvah)
- **3 tri** (tree)

- **4 chyetyrye** (chee-*tih*-ree)
- **5 pyat'** (pyat')
- **6 shyest'** (shehst')
- **7 syem'** (syem')
- **8 vosyem'** (*voh*-seem')
- **9 dyevyat'** (*dye*-veet')

But wait! You have to use a few rules when you use these numbers. The following sections give you the scoop.

The number 1 followed by a noun

If the noun you're referring to is masculine, you say **odin** followed by the noun as in **odin chyelovyek** (ah-*deen* chee-lah-*vyek*; one man). If the noun is feminine you say **odna** as in **odna dyevushka** (ahd-*nah dye*-voosh-kuh; one girl). And if the noun is neuter you say **odno** as in **odno okno** (ahd-*noh* ahk-*noh*; one window).

The number 2 followed by a noun

If you're talking about nouns that are masculine or neuter, you say **dva,** and if the noun is feminine, **dva** becomes **dvye.** After the numeral 2, you have to put the noun into the genitive case singular as in **dva chyelovyeka** (dvah chee-lah-*vye*-kuh; two men), **dva okna** (dvah ahk-*nah*; two windows), and **dvye dyevushki** (dvye *dye*-voosh-kee; two girls). For rules on forming genitive case for singular nouns, see Table 2-2 earlier in the chapter.

The numbers 3 and 4 followed by a noun

Like the numeral **dva** (dvah; two), **tri** (tree; three) and **chyetyrye** (chee-*tih*-ree; four) also require the noun used after them to be put into the genitive singular. (For rules on forming genitive case, see Table 2-2 earlier in the chapter.) Unlike **odin** and **dva**, these numbers don't change their form depending on the gender of the noun they refer to.

The numbers 5 through 9 followed by a noun

Any noun you use after the numerals 5–9 must be put into the genitive plural case, as in the phrase **pyat' dyevushyek** (pyat' *dye*-voo-shuhk; five girls) and **syem' mal'chikov** (syem' *mahl*-chee-kuhf; seven boys). (See "Changing plurals into the genitive case" earlier in this chapter.) Unlike **odin** and **dva,** these numbers don't change their form depending on the gender of the noun they are used with.

Numbers 10–19

The following are the numbers 10 through 19:

- **10 dyesyat'** (*dye*-seet')
- **11 odinnadtsat'** (ah-*dee*-nuht-tsuht')
- **12 dvyenadtsat'** (dvee-*naht*-tsuht')
- **13 trinadtsat'** (tree-*naht*-tsuht')
- **14 chyetyrnadtsat'** (chee-*tihr*-nuht-tsuht')
- **15 pyatnadtsat'** (peet-*naht*-tsuht')
- **16 shyestnadtsat'** (sheest-*naht*-tsuht')
- **17 syemnadtsat'** (seem-*naht*-tsuht')
- **18 vosyemnadtsyat'** (vuh-seem-*naht*-tsuht')
- **19 dyevyatnadtsat'** (dee-veet-*naht*-tsuht')



Starting with the numeral 11, Russian numerals up to 19 follow a recognizable pattern of adding **-nadtsat'** (*naht*-tsuht') to the numerals 1 through 9 (see the previous section). You can, however, find a few slight deviations to this rule, so watch out:

- **Dvyenadtsat**' (dvee-*naht*-tsuht'; 12) changes the **dva** (dvah; two) to a **dvye** (dve; two)
- **Chyetyrnadtsat'** (chee-*tihr*-nuht-tsuht'; 14) loses the final **e** in **chyetyrye** (chee-*tih*-ree; four)
- The numerals 15–19 all lose the final soft signs contained in 5–9 (For example, 15 is **pyatnadtsat'** and not **pyat'nadtsat'**).

Nouns following all these numerals take the genitive plural.

Numbers 20–99

To say 21, 22, 31, 32, 41, 42 . . . and so on, all you need to do is add the numerals 1 through 9 to the numeral 20, 30, 40 . . . and so on. See the following list for multiples of ten:

- **20 dvadtsat'** (*dvaht*-tsuht')
- **30 tridtsat'** (*treet*-tsuht')
- **40 sorok** (*soh*-ruhk)
- **50 pyatdyesyat'** (pee-dee-*syat'*)

- **60 shyestdyesyat'** (shees-dee-*syat'*)
- **70 syem'dyesyat'** (*syem'*-dee-seet')
- **80 vosyemdyesyat'** (*voh*-seem-dee-seet')
- **90 dyevyanosto** (dee-yee-*nohs*-tuh)

Therefore, you make the numbers 21–23 like this:

- **21 dvadtsat' odin** (*dvaht*-tsuht' ah-*deen*)
- **22 dvadtsat' dva** (*dvaht*-tsuht' dva)
- **23 dvadtsat' tri** (*dvaht*-tusht' tree)



When using nouns after these numerals, be sure to put the noun in the nominative after each number ending in 1 (as in 21 and 31); in the genitive singular case after each number ending in 2, 3, or 4 (as in 42, 53, and 64); and in the genitive plural case after all the others.

Numbers 100–999

You form each of the following numerals (except 200) by adding either a **sta** or a **sot** to the numerals 1–10:

- **100 sto** (stoh)
- **200 dvyesti** (*dvye*-stee)
- **300 trista** (*tree*-stuh)
- **400 chyetyryesta** (chee-*tih*-rees-tuh)
- **500 pyat'sot** (peet'-*soht*)
- **600 shyest'sot** (shees'-*soht*)
- **700 syem'sot** (seem'-*soht*)
- **800 vosyem'sot** (vuh-seem'-*soht*)
- **900 dyevyat'sot** (dee-veet'-*soht*)



Sta (stah; 100) is actually the genitive singular form of **sto** (stoh; 100), and it makes sense that this is the form used with the "100" part of the numerals 200, 300, and 400, because 2, 3, and 4 force the noun after them into the genitive singular. It's as if the numeral 100 (**sto**) is treated like a noun when it comes after the numerals 2, 3, and 4, in 200, 300, and 400. The exception to this rule is **dvyesti** (200), in which **sto** becomes **sti** rather than **sta**. And **sot** (soht; 100) is the genitive plural form of **sto.** This fact also makes sense because the numerals 5–9 all take the genitive plural after them.

Creating composite numbers in Russian is as easy as one, two, three. Say you need to say "one hundred fifty five" in Russian. Translate "one hundred" into **sto.** "Fifty" in Russian is **pyatdyesyat.** Five is **pyat'.** There you go; the number 155 is **sto pyatdyesyat pyat'** (stoh pee-dee-*syat* pyat'). This process also applies to numbers larger than 1,000 (see the next section).



For numbers ending in 1 (such as 121, 341, and so on), the noun following them must be in the nominative case. For numbers ending in 2–4 (122, 453, 794, and so on), the noun following them must be in the genitive singular. For numbers ending in 5–9, the noun following them must be in the genitive plural.

Numbers 1,000–1,000,000

To say 1,000, you may say either just **tysyacha** (*tih*-see-chuh) or **odna tysyacha** (ahd-*nah tih*-sih-chuh; *Literally:* one thousand). Starting with 2,000, numbers in increments of 1,000 going up to 10,000, simply add **tysyachi** (*tih*-see-chee; 1,000) or **tysyach** (*tih*-seech; 1,000) to the numerals 2–9. The numbers 2,000, 3,000, and 4,000 add **tysyachi** and 5,000–9,000 add **tysyach,** as shown in the following list:

- **1,000 tysyacha** (*tih*-see-chuh)
- **2,000 dvye tysyachi** (dvye *tih*-see-chee)
- **3,000 tri tysyachi** (tree *tih*-see-chee)
- **4,000 chyetyrye tysyachi** (chee-*tih*-ree *tih*-see-chee)
- **5,000 pyat' tysyach** (pyat' *tih*-seech)



Tysyachi is the genitive singular form and **tysyach** is the genitive plural form of **tysyacha.** Notice how 2,000–4,000 require the genitive singular form and 5,000–9,000 require the genitive plural form of **tysyacha.** That's because tysycha is treated like a noun, and nouns coming after 2, 3, and 4 must be in the genitive singular case. Nouns coming after 5–9 must be in the genitive plural.

To say 10,000, use the number **dyesyat'** (*dye*-seet'; ten) followed by the word **tysyacha** in its genitive plural form, **tysyach.** This rule also applies for numbers beyond 10,000:

- **10,000 dyesyat' tysyach** (*dye*-seet' *tih*-seech)
- **50,000 pyatdyesyat' tysyach** (pee-dee-*syat tih*-seech)
- **100,000 sto tysyach** (stoh *tih*-seech)

And one really big number is quite simple: **1,000,000 million** (mee-lee-*ohn*).

Ordinal numbers

Ordinal numbers are numbers like 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. We list the first 20 here:

- **pyervyj** (*pyer*-vihy; first)
- **vtoroj** (ftah-*rohy*; second)
- **tryetij** (*trye*-teey; third)
- **chyetvyertyj** (cheet-*vyor*-tihy; fourth)
- **pyatyj** (*pya*-tihy; fifth)
- **shyestoj** (shees-*tohy*; sixth)
- **syed'moj** (seed'-*mohy*; seventh)
- **vos'moj** (vahs'-*mohy*; eighth)
- **dyevyatyj** (dee-*vya*-tihy; ninth)
- **dyesyatyj** (dee-*sya*-tihy; tenth)
- **odinnadtsatyj** (ah-*dee*-nuht-suh-tihy; eleventh)
- **dvyennadtsatyj** (dvee-*naht*-suh-tihy; twelfth)
- **trinadtsatyj** (tree-*naht*-suh-tihy; thirteenth)
- **chyetyrnadtsatyj** (chee-*tihr*-nuht-suh-tihy; fourteenth)
- **pyatnadtsatyj** (peet-*naht*-suh-tihy; fifteenth)
- **shyestnadtsatyj** (shees-*naht*-suh-tihy; sixteenth)
- **syemnadtsatyj** (seem-*naht*-suh-tihy; seventeeth)
- **vosyem'nadtsatyj** (vuh-seem-*naht*-suh-tihy; eighteenth)
- **dyevyatnadtsatyj** (dee-veet-*naht*-suh-tihy; nineteenth)
- **dvadtsatyj** (dvuht-*sah*-tihy; twentieth)

Russian uses a principle similar to one in English with ordinal numbers higher than 20. You say the first numeral (or numerals) normally (like a cardinal number), with only the final numeral put into ordinal form:

- The 21st is **dvadtsat' pyervyj** (*dvah*-tsuht' *pyer*-vihy)
- The 46th is **sorok shyestoj** (*soh*-ruhk shees-*tohy*)
- The 65th is **shyest'dyesyat pyatyj** (shees-dee-*syat' pya*-tihy)
- The 177th is **sto syem'dyesyat' syed'moj** (stoh *syem'*-dee-seet' seed'-*mohy)*



In Russian, ordinal numbers behave just like adjectives, which means that they always agree in case, number, and gender with the nouns they precede. For more on this subject, see "Always consenting: Adjective-noun agreement" earlier in this chapter.



Fun & Games

What's the nominative singular form of these plural nouns? You can find the answers in Appendix C.

1. **komp'yutyery**
2. **knigi**
3. **okna**
4. **koshki**
5. **magaziny**

How many of these Russian numerals can you recognize? Check out the answers in Appendix C.

- **odin**
- **dva**
- **chyetyrye**
- **vosyem'**
- **dvyenadtsat'**
- **pyatnadtsat'**
- **dvadtsat'**
- **sto**
- **pyat'sot**
- **tysyacha**
- **dvadtsat' tysyach trista sorok syem'**
- **shyest'sot tysyach dyevyanosto odin**

Chapter 3

Zdravstvujtye! Privyet! Greetings and Introductions

In This Chapter

- Using informal and formal versions of "you"
- Knowing phrases for "hello" and "goodbye"
- Making sense of Russian names
- Introducing yourself and others

Just as in English, greetings and introductions in Russian are the first steps in establishing contact with other people and making a good first impression. Greetings and introductions in Russian are a bit more formal than in English. If you greet somebody correctly in Russian, that person is impressed and probably wants to get to know you better. If, however, you botch your greeting, you may get a funny look or even offend the person you're addressing.

In this chapter, we give you details on how to make your best first impression. We cover the formal and informal versions of "you," saying "hello" and "goodbye," understanding Russian names, and introducing yourself and other folks.

To Whom Am I Speaking? Being Informal or Formal



When you want to say "hello" in Russian, it's important to know who you're talking to first. Unlike in English (but similar to French, German, or Spanish, for example), Russian uses two different words for the word "you" — informal **ty** (tih) and formal **vy** (vih). (In English, no matter whom you're talking to — your close friend, your boss, the President of the United States, or your dog — you use the word "you.")



Showing affection for grandparents

The distinction between **ty** and **vy** isn't only a sign of a formal or an informal situation. **Ty** also signifies affection. Although grandparents are by definition older people, their grandchildren address them with **ty.** Maybe this is because of the very special role a Russian **babushka** (*bah*-booshkuh; grandmother) plays in the Russian family. Traditionally, Russian mothers often leave their children with *their* mothers, or *babushkas. Babushkas* often live with their grownup children who already have their own families just to help them to raise the kids: They feed them, walk them, and take them to or from school — a full-time job! No wonder the grandchildren use **ty** in addressing their grandmothers.

Although a grandfather often shares these responsibilities with his wife, his role is considered significantly less important. Nonetheless, the affectionate **ty** is still used with the word **dyedushka** (*dye*-doosh-kuh; grandfather), as well.

Here's how to know when to use which form of "you":

- In Russian, you're allowed to use the informal **ty** *only* when you're speaking to your parents, grandparents, siblings, children, and close friends.
- The formal **vy** is used in more formal situations when you talk to your boss, acquaintances, older people, or people you don't know very well, and anytime you're speaking to more than one person.



If you're a young person, you can safely use **ty** when addressing people your age, such as your classmates. Don't, however, dare to use **ty** when talking to your teacher, no matter how young she is! If you use **ty** in addressing an elderly woman or your teacher, your perhaps very innocent mistake may be taken as extreme rudeness, unless people make allowances for the fact that you're not a native Russian speaker.



As a rule, you should use the formal **vy** when addressing somebody you've never met before, an official, a superior, or someone who is older than you. As you get to know somebody better, you may switch to the informal **ty.** You even have a way of asking a person whether he or she is ready to switch to **ty: Mozhno na ty?** (*Mozh*-nuh nah tih?; May I call you informal "you?") If the answer is **da!** (dah; yes), then you're free to start calling the person **ty.** If, however, the answer is **nyet!** (nyet; no), you better wait until the person feels more comfortable with you!

If you're at all unsure whether to use **vy** or **ty,** use **vy** until the person you're addressing asks you to use **ty** or addresses you with **ty.**

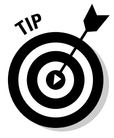
Comings and Goings: Saying Hello and Goodbye

Greetings and goodbyes are essential Russian phrases to know. In the following sections, we show you how to say "hello" in a variety of ways, give you a few greetings to use throughout the day, tell you how to ask and answer to "How are you," and wrap up a conversation with goodbyes.

Saying hello to different people

To greet one person with whom you're on informal **ty** (tih) terms, use the word **Zdravstvuj** (*zdrah*-stvooy; hello). To greet a person with whom you're on formal **vy** (vih) terms, use the longer word, **Zdravstvujtye** (*zdrah*-stvooy-tee; hello). (We cover **ty** and **vy** in the previous section.) Note that the first letter "v" in **Zdravstvujtye** is silent. Otherwise it would be hard even for Russians to pronounce!

Zdravstvujtye is also used to address more than one person. Use it when addressing two or more people even if they're children, members of your family, or close friends.



The informal way of saying "hello" in Russian is **privyet!** (pree-*vyet*) It's similar to the English "hi," and you should be on pretty familiar terms with a person before you use this greeting.

Greeting folks at any time of day

You have ways to greet people in Russian, other than the bulky **Zdravstvuj** or **Zdravstvujtye,** but how you use these greetings depends on what time of day it is. The most commonly used greetings are in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Greetings for Different Times of the Day

Greeting	*Pronunciation*	*Meaning*
dobroye utro!	*dohb*-ruh-ee *oo*-truh	Good morning! (This is the greeting you use in the morning — until noon.)
dobryj dyen'!	*dohb*-rihy dyen'	Good afternoon! (This is the greeting you can use most of the day, except for early in the morning or late at night.)
dobryj vyechyer!	*dohb*–rihy *vye*-cheer	Good evening! (This is the greeting you would most likely use in the evening.)



Note that Russians use these expressions only as greetings but not at leave-taking. (See "Taking your leave," later in this chapter for details on good-byes.) You can also use these expressions without giving any thought to whether the person you greet should be addressed with **ty** or **vy.** No matter whom you greet, you can safely use any of these phrases.

Handling "How are you?"

The easiest and most popular way to ask "How are you?" is **Kak dyela?** (kahk dee-*lah*) You use this phrase in rather informal settings, like at parties, meeting a friend on the street, or talking on the phone.

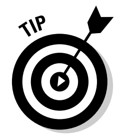
A more formal way to ask "How are you?" is **Kak vy pozhivayetye?** (kahk vih puh-zhih-*vah*-ee-tee) You use this phrase when speaking with your boss, your professor, or somebody you've just met.

You won't offend anyone in a formal setting if you say **Kak dyela?,** but you're better off sticking to **Kak vy pozhivayete?** Russians tend to err on the side of more formality rather than less.



A word of caution. In the English-speaking world, "How are you?" is just a standard phrase often used in place of a greeting. The person asking this formulaic question doesn't expect to get the full account of how you're actually doing. But in Russia it's different. They want to know everything! When they ask you how you're doing, they are in fact genuinely interested in how you're doing and expect you to give them a more or less accurate account of the most recent events in your life.

How should you reply to **Kak dyela?** Although optimistic Americans don't hesitate to say "terrific" or "wonderful," Russians usually respond with a more reserved **Khorosho** (khuh-rah-*shoh*; good) or **Normal'no** (nahr-*mahl'*-nuh; normal or okay), or even a very neutral **Nichyego** (nee-chee-*voh*; so-so, *Literally:* nothing) or **Nyeplokho** (nee-*ploh*-khuh; not bad).



If you're truly feeling great, go ahead and answer **pryekrasno!** (pree-*krahs*-nuh; wonderful), or **vyelikolyepno!** (vee-lee-kah-*lyep*-nuh; terrific). But beware that by saying "terrific" or "wonderful," you're putting your Russian friend on guard: Russians know all too well that life is not a picnic. To a Russian, wonderful and terrific events are the exception, not the rule. To be on the safe side, just say either **Nichyego** or **Nyeplokho.**

And don't stop there! Be sure to ask the person how she's doing. You simply say **A u vas?** (ah oo vahs; and you?; formal) If you want to be less formal, you say **A u tyebya?** (ah oo tee-*bya*; and you?)

Taking your leave

The usual way to say *goodbye* in almost any situation is **Do svidaniya!** (duh svee-*dah*-nee-ye), which literally means "Till (the next) meeting." If you're on informal terms with somebody, you may also say **Poka** (pah-*kah*; 'bye or see you later).

The phrase you use while leave-taking in the evening or just before bed is **Spokojnoj Nochi** (spah-*kohy*-nuhy *noh*-chee; Good night). The phrase works both for formal and informal situations.

Talkin' the Talk



Sasha bumps into her classmate Oleg on the subway. Sasha is just about to get off.

Oleg: **Sasha, privyet!**
sah-shuh, pree-*vyet!*
Sasha, hi!

Sasha: (pleasantly surprised) **Oj, Olyeg! Privyet! Kak dyela?**
ohy, ah-*lyek!* pree-*vyet!* kahk dee-*lah?*
Oh, Olyeg! Hi! How are you?

Oleg: **Nichyego. A u tyebya?**
nee-chee-*voh.* ah oo tee-*bya?*
Okay. And you?

Sasha: **Nyeplokho. Oj, eto moya stantsiya. Do svidaniya, Olyeg.**
nee-*ploh*-khuh. ohy, *eh*-tuh mah-*ya stahn*-tsih-ye. duh svee-*dah*-nee-ye, ah-*lyek.*
Not bad. Oh, this is my station. Goodbye, Olyeg.

Oleg: **Poka!**
pah-*kah!*
Bye!

Words to Know

privyet	pree-*vyet*	hi
Kak dyela?	kahk dee-*lah*	How are you?
nichyego	nee-chee-*voh*	okay
A u tyebya?	ah oo tee-*bya*	And you?
nyeplokho	nee-*ploh*-khuh	not bad
do svidaniya	duh svee-*dah*-nee-ye	goodbye
poka	pah-*kah*	'bye

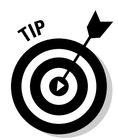
Not So Simple: Deciphering Russian Names

The Russian word "name" is **imya** (*ee*-mye), but you may not hear this word when people ask about your name. That's because what they actually ask is not "What is your name?" but literally, "How do people/they call you . . . ?" — **Kak vas/tyebya zovut?** (kahk vahz/tee-*bya* zah-*voot*) Consequently, when you answer the question, you say how people in fact call you — **Myenya zovut Dzhon** (mee-*nya* zah-*voot* dzhohn; My name is John, *Literally:* They call me John).

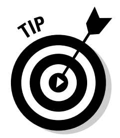
Saying names in Russian is a bit more complicated than in English. The reason is that in introducing themselves, especially in formal situations, Russians use the *patronymic* (patronymic means father's name) right after the first name. The patronymic usually has the ending **-vich** (veech), meaning "son of," or **-ovna** (o*hv*-nuh), meaning "daughter of." For example, a man named Boris, whose father's name is Ivan, would be known as Boris Ivanovich (Ivanovich is the patronymic). A woman named Anna whose father's name is Ivan would be known as Anna Ivanovna (Ivanovna is the patronymic). A Russian almost never formally addresses a person named Mikhail as just "Mikhail" but rather as "Mikhail" plus his patronymic with the suffix **-vich** (for instance, "Mikhail Nikolayevich" or "Mikhail Borisovich").

You may say that Russians have three names. The first name is a baptismal name; the second name is his or her father's name with the ending **-vich** for men, or **-ovna** for women; and the third is the last name, or the family name.

Men's last names and women's last names have different endings. That's because Russian last names have genders. Although most Russian male last names have the ending **-ov** (of), female names take the ending **-ova** (*ohv*-nuh). Imagine that your new acquaintance, Anna Ivanovna Ivanova, is a married woman. Her husband's last name isn't **Ivanova** (ee-vuh-*noh*-vuh), but **Ivanov** (ee-vuh-*nof*).



No matter what your relation is to another person (either informal or formal), you can still address that person by his or her first name and patronymic. So if you're unsure whether you're on **ty** or **vy** terms with someone, go ahead and address the person by the first name and patronymic just to be safe. When you're clearly on friendly terms with the person, you can switch to using the first name only.



In everyday conversation Russians almost never use words like Mr., Mrs., Ms., and Miss. Russians use these kinds of titles only in extremely formal situations, such as in government proceedings or in legal contracts. In such situations you may hear somebody referred to as **Gospodin Putin** (guhs-spah-*deen poo*-teen; Mr. Putin) or **Gospozha Gorbachyova** (guhs-pah-*zhah* guhr-buh-*choh*-vuh; Mrs. Gorbachev).



Playing the Russian nickname game

By the way, what does Mr. Ivanov call his wife (whose name is Anna)? Most likely, he uses the diminutives Anya, Anechka, Anyuta, or Annushka. Russians are extremely ingenious in creating new diminutives and are constantly changing them even when addressing one and the same person. This is one of the reasons why Americans sometimes find it difficult to read Russian novels. While it seems that new characters are constantly being introduced by the author, the fact is that in many cases it's an old character with a new diminutive version of her name! For example, Ekatyerina Shchyerbatskaya, a famous character from Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karyenina*, is sometimes affectionately called by the diminutives, Katyenka, Katiusha, and Kitty. No wonder Russian novels are so long!

Break the Ice: Making Introductions

Making a good first impression is important for the beginning of any relationship. Russians tend to be more formal than Americans in how they approach a person they've just met. In the following sections, we show you the best ways to introduce yourself to somebody you've just met. We also show you phrases to use when getting acquainted with someone, how to ask for somebody's name, and the best way to introduce your friends, colleagues, and family to new people.

Getting acquainted



In English, introducing yourself is the best way to start a conversation with somebody you don't know. Not so in Russian. When introducing themselves, Russians are a little more ceremonial. Russians like to begin with first *suggesting* to get acquainted by saying "Let's get acquainted!" They have two ways to say this, depending on whether they're on formal **vy** (vih) or informal **ty** (tih) terms with the person (see "Who Am I Speaking To? Being Informal or Formal" earlier in this chapter for info on these terms). Check out Table 3-2.

Table 3-2 Asking to Become Acquainted

Introduction	*Pronunciation*	*Meaning*
Formal: Davajtye poznakomimsya!	duh-*vahy*-tee puhz-nuh-*koh*-meem-sye	Let's get acquainted! (addressing a person formally or two or more people)
Informal: Davaj poznakomimsya!	duh-*vahy* puhz-nuh-*koh*-meem-sye	Let's get acquainted! (addressing a person informally)

If somebody says one of these phrases to you, you should politely accept the suggestion. To respond, you can just use the first word, which makes your task much easier (see Table 3-3).

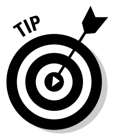
Table 3-3 Agreeing to Become Acquainted

Response	*Pronunciation*	*Meaning*
Formal: Davajtye!	duh-*vahy*-tee	Okay (*Literally:* Let's; addressing a person formally or two or more people)
Informal: Davaj!	duh-*vahy*	Okay (*Literally:* Let's; addressing a person informally)

Asking for people's names and introducing yourself

The formal version of "What is your name?" is **Kak vas zovut?** (kahk vahz zah-*voot*?; *Literally:* What do they call you?) The informal version of "What is your name?" is **Kak tyebya zovut?** (kahk tee-*bya* zah-*voot*; *Literally:* What do they call you?)

To introduce yourself in Russian, just say **Myenya zovut** (Mee-*nya* zah-*voot*) + your name. (See "Not So Simple: Deciphering Russian Names," earlier in this chapter, for details about Russian names.)



When introducing yourself, Russian doesn't distinguish between formal and informal. You use the introduction **Menya zovut** in both formal and informal situations.

After you're introduced to someone, you may want to say, "Nice to meet you." In Russian you say **ochyen' priyatno** (*oh*-cheen' pree-*yat*-nuh; *Literally:* very pleasant). The person you've been introduced to may then reply **mnye tozhye** (mnye *toh*-zheh; same here). You use the phrases **ochyen' priyatno** and **mnye tozhye** in both formal and informal situations.

Introducing your friends, colleagues, and family

Everyday, common introductions are easy in Russian. When you want to introduce your friends, all you need to say is **Eto . . .** (*eh*-tuh; This is . . .) Then you simply add the name of the person (see "Not So Simple: Deciphering Russian Names" earlier in this chapter for more info about names).

To indicate that the person is an acquaintance or a colleague, you say one of two things:

- If the person is a man, you say **Eto moj znakomyj** (*eh*-tuh mohy znuh-*koh*-mihy; This is my acquaintance).
- If the person is a woman, you say **Eto moya znakomaya** (*eh*-tuh mah-*ya* znuh-*koh*-muh-ye; This is my acquaintance).

As in English, the same construction (**Eto** + the family member) applies to a broad circle of people including your family members. For example, to introduce you mother, you say **Eto moya mama** (*eh*-tuh mah-*ya mah*-muh; This is my mother); to introduce your brother, just say **Eto moj brat** (*eh*-tuh mohy braht; This is my brother). To introduce other members of your family, see Chapter 4, where we provide words indicating other family members.

Talkin' the Talk

Anna is approached by her friend, Viktor, and his acquaintance, Boris Aleksyeyevich:

Viktor: **Oj, privyet, Anna!**
ohy, pree-*vyet, ah*-nuh!
Oh, hi Anna!

Anna: **Privyet Viktor! Kak dyela?**
Pree-*vyet veek*-tuhr! kahk dee-*lah*?
Hi, Viktor! How are you?

Viktor: **Nichyego. A u tyebya.**
nee-chee-*voh.* ah oo tee-*bya*?
Okay. And you?

Anna: **Nyeplokho.**
nee-*ploh*-khuh.
Not bad.

Viktor (to Anna): **A eto moj znakomyj, Boris Alyeksyeyevich.**
ah *eh*-tuh mohy znuh-*koh*-mihy, bah-*rees u*h-leek-*sye*-ee-veech.
And this is my acquaintance, Boris Alekseevich.

Anna (to Boris Aleksyeyevich):	**Zdravstvujtye! Davajtye poznakomimsya!** *zdrah*-stvooy-tee! duh-*vahy*-tee puhz-nuh-*koh*-meem-sye! Hello! Let's get acquainted!
Boris Aleksyeyevich:	**Davajtye! Myenya zovut Boris.** duh-*vahy*-tee! mee-*nya* zah-*voot* bah-*rees.* Let's! My name is Boris.
Anna:	**Ochyen' priyatno!** ***oh*-cheen' pree-*yat*-nuh!** Nice to meet you!
Boris Aleksyeyevich:	**Mnye tozhye.** mnye *toh*-zheh. Nice to meet you, too. (*Literally:* same here)

Words to Know

Eto moj znakomyj	eh-tuh mohy znuh-koh-mihy	This is my acquaintance
Davajtye poznakomimsya!	duh-vahy-tee puhz-nuh-koh-meem-sye	Let's get acquainted!
Myenya zovut	mee-nya zah-voot	My name is
Ochyen' priyatno!	oh-cheen' pree-yat-nuh	Nice to meet you!
mnye tozhye	mnye toh-zheh	likewise



Fun & Games

Practice saying "Hello" in Russian to the following people. Should you use **Zdravstvujtye** (*Zdrah*-stvooy-tee) or **Zdravstvuj** (*Zdrah*-stvooy)? Find the correct answers in Appendix C.

1. Your close friend
2. Your boss
3. Your teacher
4. Your doctor
5. Your pet
6. A group of friends
7. Several children

Try practicing greetings by time of day. In the right column, find and say the greeting that should be used at the time of day indicated in the left column. See Appendix C for the correct answers.

3 p.m.	**Dobryj dyen'!**
11 a.m.	**Dobryj vyechyer!**
8 a.m.	**Dobroye utro!**
8 p.m.	

The dialogue between Nina and Natasha got scrambled. Take a few minutes to unscramble it and put the phrases in correct order (see Appendix C to check your answers). Nina and Natasha are both 18 years old. They study at the same school but have not met yet.

Natasha:	**Davaj!**
Nina:	**Zdravstvuj! Davaj poznakomimsya!**
Nina:	**Myenya zovut Nina. A kak tyebya zovut?**
Nina:	**Ochyen' priyatno!**
Natasha:	**Myenya zovut Natasha.**
Natasha:	**Mnye tozhye.**

Part II
Russian in Action



"If you're going to slurp your borscht, at least try to slurp it in Russian."

In this part . . .

Part II gives you all the Russian you need for ordinary, everyday living. You discover Russian phrases and expressions for making small talk, eating, drinking, going shopping, talking about your favorite sports and hobbies, and having fun on the town the Russian way. You also find out how to make telephone calls, send letters, and talk about the house and office in Russian.

Chapter 4

Getting to Know You: Making Small Talk

In This Chapter

- Breaking the ice by talking about yourself
- Exchanging contact information
- Knowing what to say when you don't understand something

The best way to start getting to know someone is through small talk. Imagine you're on a plane on your way to Russia. Chances are the person sitting next to you is Russian. So, what are you going to talk about? To break the ice you're probably going to want to talk about yourself, where you're from, your age, your job, and your family, maybe even about the weather. Just before the flight lands, you probably want to give and receive contact information.

In this chapter we show you how to do all these things in Russian and also what to say when you don't understand something. You'll be ready for your first complete conversation with a real Russian!



Russian doesn't have a translation for the phrase "small talk." That's because Russians take small talk seriously, especially when they talk to foreigners. One reason for this is that for most of its long and turbulent history, Russia was virtually cut off from the rest of the world. Chatting with foreigners has always been a way for Russians to satisfy their strong curiosity about the outside world. In other words, they really want to get to know you and everything about you and as fast as possible. Don't be shocked if their direct questions sometimes sound like KGB interrogations. They're just curious!

Let Me Tell You Something: Talking about Yourself

What do people talk about when they first meet? The topics are highly predictable: home, family, jobs, and even age. In the following sections, we deal with each of them.

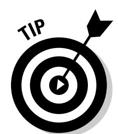


The Western view of what one can ask about during the first casual conversation is quite different from the Russian view. The rules of Russian small talk are quite a bit looser and allow you to ask questions that a Western code of good manners would consider quite forward, to say the least, including such topics as money, annual income, death, illnesses, and sex, among others. For instance, a young 30-year-old man should expect to be asked why he's not yet married. And a recently married couple will probably be asked why they don't have children yet!

Stating where you're from

One of the topics that's bound to come up during your first conversations is your country of origin. Expect to hear the question, **Otkuda vy?** (aht-*koo*-duh vih; Where are you from?) To answer, you can say:

- **Ya iz Amyeriki** (ya eez uh-*mye*-ree-kee; I am from America)
- **Ya zhivu v Amyerikye** (ya zhih-*voo* v uh-*mye*-ree-kye; I live in America)



It's also common and acceptable to answer **Otkuda vy?** with a statement of nationality; for example, you can say "I am American" rather than "I live in the United States." See the next section for more about describing your nationality.

After a Russian finds out your country of origin, he may ask you where in the country you're from (such as a city or a state). You may hear questions like



So how much do you make?

Among the questions Russians don't hesitate to ask are **Kakaya u vas zarplata?** (kuh-*kah*-ye oo vahs/tee-*bya* zuhr-*plah*-tuh; formal), **Kakaya u tyebya zarplata?** (kuh-*kah*-ye oo tee-*bya* zuhr-*plah*-tuh; informal), and **Skol'ko vy poluchayete?** (*skoh'l*-kuh vih puh-loo-*chah*-ee-tee), which basically mean the same thing: *How much do you make?* In Russia the income one earns is usually described on a monthly basis. That's why, before answering, you may want to divide your yearly income by 12 (12 months).

- **V kakom shtatye vy zhivyote?** (f kuh-*kohm* shtah-tee vih zhih-*vyo*-tee; What state do you live in?)
- **Vy iz kakogo shtata?** (vih ees kuh-*koh*-vuh *shtah*-tuh; What state are you from?)
- **V kakom gorodye vy zhivyote?** (f kuh-*kohm goh*-ruh-dee vih zhih-*vyo*-tee; What city do you live in?)
- **Vy iz kakogo goroda?** (vih eez kuh-*koh*-vuh *goh*-ruh-duh; What city are you from?)

Later, when you're asked where in the U.S. (or England or Australia) you live, you may want to say the city or state you're from:

- **Ya zhivu v Siyetlye** (ya zhih-*voo* f see-*yet*-lee; I live in Seattle)
- **Ya iz Siyetla** (ya ees see-*yet*-luh; I am from Seattle)



Notice that when the preposition **v** is followed by a noun beginning with a consonant, it's pronounced like *f,* not *v,* and when the preposition **iz** is followed by a noun beginning with a consonant, it's pronounced *ees,* not *eez.*



When you say **Ya zhivu v . . .** (ya zhih-*voo* v; I live in . . .), use the word describing the place where you live in the prepositional case, because the preposition **v** (in) takes that case. When saying **Ya iz . . .** (ya eez; I am from . . .), use the next word in the genitive case because the preposition **iz** (eez; from) requires genitive. (For more info on cases, see Chapter 2.)

Talking about your nationality and ethnic background

Because Russia has historically been a very ethnically diverse country, Russians tend to be aware of and interested in different nationalities. From the very start of your friendship or conversation, a Russian will want to know your nationality or ethnic background. So be prepared to hear the next question: **A kto vy po-natsional'nosti?** (ah ktoh vih puh-nuh-tsee-ah-*nahl'*-nuhst-ee; And what is your nationality?)

Russian has three different words to indicate nationality. The choice of the word depends on the gender and number of the person or people whose nationality is being described. Select the phrase that describes you:

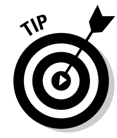
- **Ya amyerikanyets** (ya uh-mee-ree-*kahn*-neets; I'm an American man)
- **Ya amyerikanka** (ya uh-mee-ree-*kahn*-kuh; I'm an American woman)
- **My amyerikantsy** (mih uh-mee-ree-*kahn*-tsih; We're Americans)



You can use the phrase **My amyerikantsy** for any group of American men, women, or mixed genders.



Russian is very specific about gender. If you're a male, make sure you use the word indicating the nationality of a man, and if you're a female, use the word indicating the nationality of a woman. Imagine a man introducing himself as **Ya amyerkinanka.** Although people will understand what he's saying, they'll be quite amused, and if you're that man, you may be just a tad embarrassed.



Most Russians are highly educated people. They know that the United States, Australia, and Great Britain are ethnically diverse countries. Therefore, they also ask the question **A kto vy po-natsional'nosti?** (ah ktoh vih puh-nuh-tsee-ah-*nahl'*-nuhst-ee; And what is your nationality?) to find out your specific ethnic heritage (rather than your nationality). This situation is especially true if you don't look like a "typical American," which to a Russian means a blue-eyed, blond, tall, and athletic-looking Anglo-Saxon.

Another possibility is that your new Russian friend will attempt to guess your nationality instead of asking you outright. Most Russians are very good at recognizing foreigners in a crowd of people and sometimes are even able to guess your nationality just by looking at you. If this is the case, you may hear questions like these right off the bat:

- **Vy amyerikanyets?** (vih uh-mee-ree-*kah*-neets; Are you American? *Literally:* Are you an American man?)
- **Vy amyerikanka?** (vih uh-mee-ree-*kahn*-kuh; Are you American? *Literally:* Are you an American woman?)
- **Vy amyerikantsy?** (vih uh-mee-ree-*kahn*-tsih; Are you Americans?)

In Table 4-1 you find a list of some nationalities and specific ethnicities. Find the one that best describes your background, and note that Russian doesn't capitalize names of nationalities and ethnic backgrounds.

Table 4-1 Words Denoting Nationality and Ethnicity

Nationality of a Man	*Nationality of a Woman*	*Nationality of People*	*Translation*
afrikanyets (uhf-ree-*kah*-neets)	afrikakanka (uhf-ree-*kahn*-kuh)	afrikantsy (uhf-ree-*kahn*-tsih)	African
amyerikanyets (uh-mee-ree-*kah*-neets)	amyerikanka (uh-mee-ree-*kahn*-kuh)	amyerikantsy (uh-mee-ree-*kahn*-tsih)	American
indyeyets (een-*dye*-eets)	indiyanka (een-dee-*ahn*-kuh)	indyejtsy (een-*dyey*-tsih)	American Indian
arab (uh-*rahp*)	arabka (uh-*rahp*-kuh)	araby (uh-*rah*-bih)	Arab(ic)

Nationality of a Man	***Nationality of a Woman***	***Nationality of People***	***Translation***
argyentinyets (uhr-geen-*tee*-neets)	argyentinka (uhr-geen-*teen*-kuh)	argyentintsy (uhr-geen-*teen*-tsih)	Argentinean
kitayets (kee-*tah*-eets)	kitayanka (kee-tuh-*yan*-kuh)	kitajtsy (kee-*tahy*-tsih)	Chinese
yegiptyanin (ee-geep-*tya*-neen)	yegiptyanka (ee-geep-*tyan*-kuh)	yegiptyanye (ee-geep-*tya*-nee)	Egyptian
anglichanin (uhn-glee-*chah*-neen)	anglichanka (uhn-glee-*chahn*-kuh)	anglichanye (uhn-glee-*chah*-nee)	English
frantsuz (fruhn-*tsooz)*	frantsuzhyenka (fruhn-*tsoo*-zhihn-kuh)	frantsuzy (fruhn-*tsoo*-zih)	French
nyemyets (*nye*-meets)	nyemka (*nyem*-kuh)	nyemtsy (*nyem*-tsih)	German
indus (een-*doos)*	indiyanka (een-dee-*ahn*-kuh)	indusy (een-*doo*-sih)	Indian
iranyets (ee-*rah*-neets)	iranka (ee-*rahn*-kuh)	irantsy (ee-*rahn*-tsih)	Iranian
irlandyets (eer-*lahn*-deets)	irlandka (eer-*lahn*-kuh)	irlandtsy (eer-*lahn*-tsih)	Irish
ital'yanyets (ee-tuhl-*ya*-neets)	ital'yanka (ee-tuhl-*yan*-kuh)	ital'yantsy (ee-tuhl-*yan*-tsih)	Italian
yaponyets (ee-*poh*-neets)	yaponka (ee-*pohn*-kuh)	yapontsy (ee-*pohn*-tsih)	Japanese
yevryej (eev-*ryey)*	yevryejka (eev-*ryey*-kuh)	yevryei (eev-*rye*-ee)	Jewish
myeksikanyets (meek-see-*kah*-neets)	myeksikanka (mee-ksee-*kahn*-kuh)	myeksikantsy (mee-ksee-*kahn*-tsih)	Mexican
polyak (pah-*lyak)*	pol'ka (*pohl'*-kuh)	polyaki (pah-*lya*-kee)	Polish
russkij (*roos*-keey)	russkaya (*roos*-kuh-ye)	russkiye (*roos*-kee-ye)	Russian
shotlandyets (shaht-*lahn*-deets)	shotlandka (shaht-*lahn*-kuh)	shotlandtsy (shaht-*lahn*-tsih)	Scottish
ispanyets (ees-*pah*-neets)	ispanka (ees-*pahn*-kuh)	ispnatsy (ees-*pahn*-tsih)	Spanish
turok (*too*-ruhk)	turchanka (tuhr-*chahn*-kuh)	turki (*toor*-kee)	Turkish



Most words denoting nationality of women have the ending **-ka** as in **amyerikanka** (American woman). Many words denoting nationality of men end in **-yets** as in **kitayets** (Chinese man). Some words, however, slightly divert from this rule, such as the word **frantsuz** (frahn-*tsoos*; Frenchman). Most words denoting the nationality of people (plural) have the ending **-tsy.** Exceptions to the words you may be using a lot include the following:

- **russkij** (*roos*-keey; Russian male)
- **russkaya** (*roo*-skuh-ye; Russian female)
- **russkiye** (*roo*-skee-ye; Russians)

Other exceptions are words like **yevryei** (eev-*rye*-ee; Jewish people) and **anglichanye** (uhn-glee-*chah-nee*; English people). Unfortunately, no hard and fast rule exists for this, so you just need to memorize the words as they are.

Note the translation of the word "Indian." English uses the word "Indian" for both American and Asian Indians. Russian uses **indus** to indicate an Asian Indian man and **indyeyets** to indicate a Native American man. This difference eliminates the ambiguity of English. However, this distinction disappears in the word **indiyanka,** which denotes both an Asian Indian and an American Indian woman, but the distinction reappears when you refer to a group of Indians (either **indusy** or **indyejsty**).

Talkin' the Talk



John and Natasha are on board a flight from Frankfurt to Moscow. They've just met.

Natasha: **Dzhohn, otkuda vy?**
dzhon, aht-*koo*-duh vih?
John, where are you from?

John: **Ya amyerikanyets. A vy russkaya?**
ya uh-mee-ree-*kah*-neets. ah vih *roos*-kuh-ye?
I'm American. And are you Russian?

Natasha: **Da, russkaya. Ya zhivu v Pyermi. A gdye vy zhivyotye v Amyerikye?**
dah, *roos*-kuh-ye. ya zhih-*voo* f pyer-*mee.* ah gdye vih zhih-*vyo*-tee v uh-*mye*-ree-kee?
Yes, I am Russian. I live in Perm. And where do you live in the U.S.?

John: **Ya iz shtata Viskonsin. Ya zhivu i uchus' v Madisonye.**
ya ees-*shtah*-tuh vees-*kohn*-seen. ya zhih-*voo* ee oo-*choos'* v *mah*-dee-sohn-ee.

I'm from the state of Wisconsin. I live and study in Madison.

Natasha: **Kak intyeryesno! Vy nye pokhozhi na amyerikantsa. Kto vy po-natsional'nosti?**
kahk een-tee-*ryes*-nuh! vih nee pah-*khoh*-zhih nuh uh-mee-ree-*kahn*-tsuh. ktoh vih puh-nuh-tsih-ah-*nahl'*-nuhs-tee?
How interesting! You don't look American. What's your nationality?

John: **Moya mama myeksikanka, a papa ital'yanyets.**
mah-*ya mah*-muh meek-see-*kahn*-kuh, uh *pah*-puh ee-tuhl-*ya*-neets.
My mother is Mexican, and my father is Italian.

Natasha: **Ponyatno.**
pah-*nyat*-nuh.
I see.

Words to Know

Otkuda vy?	aht-koo-duh vih	Where are you from?
Gdye vy zhivyotye?	gdye vih zhih-vyo-tee	Where do you live?
Ya zhivu v . . .	ya zhih-voo v	I live in . . .
Kto vy po natsional'nosti?	ktoh vih puh-nuhts-ee-ah-nahl'-nuhst-ee	What's your nationality?
Vy nye pokhozhi na . . .	vih nee pah-khoh-zhih nuh	You don't look like a . . .
Ya uchus' v	ya oo-choos' v	I study at/in
iz shtata	ees-shtah-tuh	from the state
Kak intyeryesno!	kahk een-tee-ryes-nuh	How interesting!
Ponyatno	pah-nyat-nuh	I see



The nationality question: A touchy subject

The question **Kto vy po natsional'nosti?** (ktoh vih puh-nuhts-ee-ah-*nahl'*-nuhst-ee; What's your nationality?) isn't just a matter of small talk for Russians. The question of one's ethnic background has been important in Russia from time immemorial. Unfortunately, Russians weren't always welcoming of foreigners. For centuries, in the big Russian Empire, non-Russians, including other Slavs such as Ukrainians, Byelorussians, and Poles were officially and unofficially considered to be inferior to the Great Russians. Great Russian nationalism, which is still very much alive today, goes back to the official policy of the Russian autocracy toward national minorities.

An example of Russian nationalism was the policy of Russification started by Catherine the Great (a German by birth) in the 18th century. Russification was an attempt to inspire a sense of Russian-ness in all peoples through a reverence for Russia's past, traditions, and culture, through the use of the Russian language, and by converting non-Christians to the Orthodox faith. Many people were forbidden to use their non-Russian language in schools and in the administration.

The results of Russification were especially evident in the policy of the authorities toward the Jews. Jews were classified as **inorodsty** (een-ah-*rohd*-tsih; non-citizens/aliens), who were non-Christian and considered second-class citizens. Joseph Stalin, who was a Georgian, used the idea of Russian supremacy as a way of establishing centralized power in the country, and he used Russian anti-Semitism as a method of inspiring feelings of Russian patriotism in all the citizens of the Soviet Union. That's why the question of one's nationality is still a touchy subject for Russians.

Telling your age



To inquire about someone's **vozrast** (*vohz*-ruhst; age) in Russian, you ask one of two questions:

- Use **Skol'ko tyebye lyet?** (*skohl'*-kuh tee-*bye* lyet; How old are you?) in a situation where you use the informal **tih** (you) address.
- Otherwise, say **Skol'ko vam lyet?** (*skohl'*-kuh vahm lyet; How old are you?) For more on formal and informal "you," see Chapter 3.



The answer to the questions **Skol'ko vam/tyebye lyet?** isn't as simple as you may think. First of all, in Russia age is seen as something that happens to you, something you can't control (and this is, after all, very true). That's why, rather than using the subject in the nominative case, Russian uses the dative form of the person whose age is being described. In Russian you say literally "To me is 23 years old."



Time flies in Russia

Attitudes toward age and aging differ in various cultures. You may notice that Russians on the whole — how should we put it? — *age earlier* than Americans. A young 26-year-old single woman is definitely "old" if not "an old maid" because marrying age in Russia begins much earlier.

Age today is an important factor in hiring decisions in Russia. A 40-year-old man may find it extremely hard to find new employment just because he is "too old." In their job announcements, employers don't hesitate to mention, for example, that they're hiring only young individuals no older than 35 to 40 years old.

As to marrying age, following the Western example, young people are starting to get married a little later today. Nonetheless, the average marrying age for Russians is in the early or mid-twenties.

The second tricky part of talking about your age is that the translation of the word "year(s)" depends on how old you are. This is how it works:

- If you're 1, 21, or 31 years old (in other words, if the numeral indicating your age is 1 or ends in 1), use the word **god** (goht; year), as in **Mnye 21 god** (mnye *dvaht*-tsuht' ah-*deen* goht; I am twenty-one years old).
- If you're 2, 3, or 4 years old (and already want to speak Russian!) or the numeral denoting your age ends in a 2, 3, or 4, use the word **goda** (*goh*-duh; years), as in **Mnye 22 goda** (mnye *dvaht*-tsuht' dvah *goh*-duh; I am twenty-two years old).
- If you're 5, 25, or 105 years old or the numeral denoting your age ends in 5, use the word **lyet,** as in **Mnye 25 lyet** (mnye *dvaht*-tsuht' pyat' lyet; I am twenty-five years old).
- If the numeral denoting your age ends in a 6, 7, 8, or 9, or if your age is 10 through 20, use the word **lyet,** as in **Mnye 27 lyet** (mney *dvaht*-tsuht' syem' lyet; I am twenty-seven years old).

Check out Chapter 2 for more about cases and numbers.

Discussing your family

Family is a big part of Russian culture, so your Russian acquaintances will certainly be curious about yours. Whether you have a small family or a large one, in this section we give all the words and phrases you need to know to talk about your family with your new Russian friends.

Beginning with basic terms for family members

If you have a picture of your family, go ahead and show it to your new Russian friend. But don't expect him or her to do the same! Russians rarely carry pictures of their family with them and even consider it to be a typical demonstration of Western oversentimentality.



Your best bet is to just talk about the members of your family with your new Russian friend, using the following words:

- **mat'** (maht'; mother)
- **otyets** (ah-*tyets*; father)
- **rodityeli** (rah-*dee*-tee-lee; parents)
- **syn** (sihn; son)
- **synovya** (sih-nah-*vya*; sons)
- **doch'** (dohch'; daughter)
- **dochyeri** (*doh*-chee-ree; daughters)
- **zhyena** (zhih-*nah*; wife)
- **muzh** (moosh; husband)
- **brat** (braht; brother)
- **brat'ya** (*brah*-tye; brothers)
- **syestra** (sees-*trah*; sister)
- **syostry** (*syos*-trih; sisters)
- **ryebyonok** (ree-*byo*-nuhk; child)
- **dyeti** (*dye*-tee; children)
- **babushka** (*bah*-boosh-kuh; grandmother)
- **dyedushka** (*dye*-doosh-kuh; grandfather)
- **babushka i dyedushka** (*bah*-boosh-kuh ee *dye*-doosh-kuh; grandparents; *Literally:* grandmother and grandfather)
- **vnuk** (vnook; grandson)
- **vnuki** (*vnoo*-kee; grandsons)
- **vnuchka** (*vnooch*-kuh; granddaughter)
- **vnuchki** (*vnooch*-kee; granddaughters)
- **vnuki** (*vnoo*-kee; grandchildren)
- **dyadya** (*dya*-dye; uncle)
- **tyotya** (*tyo*-tye; aunt)
- **kuzyen** (koo-*zehn*; male cousin)

- **kuzina** (koo-*zee*-nuh; female cousin)
- **plyemyannik** (plee-*mya*-neek; nephew)
- **plyemyannitsa** (plee-*mya*-nee-tsuh; niece)
- **syem'ya** (seem'-*ya*; family)

Talking about family members with the verb "to have"

When talking about your family, use phrases like "I have a brother" and "I have a big family" and "I don't have any brothers or sisters." To say these phrases you need to know how to use the verb **yest'** (yest'; to have).



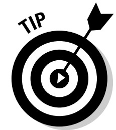
Just as in English, this Russian verb expresses possession. For example, in the sentence, "My brother has a car," the phrase "my brother" indicates a possessor or owner and the word "car" indicates the thing that belongs to the owner. In Russian, the owner is expressed by the prepositional phrase **U** + a noun (or phrase) in the genitive case, followed by the verb **yest'** (have, has), and the thing that indicates what's being possessed or owned is expressed by the noun (phrase) in the nominative case. In other words, to convey the idea "My brother has a car," you have to create the Russian word combination **U** + "My brother" (genitive case) followed by the word **yest'** and then followed by the word "car" in the nominative case. The resulting Russian sentence can be literally translated into English as "At my brother there is a car": **U moyego brata yest' mashina.** (oo muh-ee-*voh brah*-tuh yest' muh-*shih*-nuh; My brother has a car.) Chapter 2 has the full scoop on cases.

Use the construction **U myenya yest'** . . . (oo mee-*nya* yest'; I have . . .) when talking about your own family:

- **U myenya yest' brat** (oo mee-*nya* yest' braht; I have a brother)
- **U myenya yest' syestra** (oo mee-*nya* yest' sees-*trah*; I have a sister)

If you want to say that you don't have a brother, a sister, a nephew, and so on, you use the construction **U myenya nyet** (oo mee-*nya* nyet) plus a noun in the genitive case:

- **U myenya nyet brata** (oo mee-*nya* nyet braht-uh; I don't have a brother)
- **U myenya nyet syestry** (oo mee-*nya* nyet sees-*trih*; I don't have a sister)



The genitive plural forms of some family members are irregular, and you need to memorize them:

- **brat'yev** (*braht'*-eef; brothers)
- **syestyor** (sees-*tyor*; sisters)
- **synovyej** (sih-nah-*vyey*; sons)
- **dochyeryej** (duh-chee-*ryey*; daughters)
- **dyetyej** (deet-*yey*; children)

Be sure to use these genitive plural forms in the construction **U myenya nyet . . .** (oo mee-*nya* nyet; I don't have . . .), as in:

- **U myenya nyet dochyeryej** (oo mee-*nya* nyet duh-chee-*ryey*; I don't have any daughters)
- **U myenya nyet synovyej** (oo mee-*nya* nyet sih-nah-*vyey*; I don't have any sons)
- **U myenya nyet dyetyej** (oo mee-*nya* nyet deet-*yey*; I don't have children)

Describing your job



Because what you do for living is crucial for a Russian's understanding of who you are, be prepared to answer the question **Kto vy po profyessii?** (ktoh vih puh-prah-*fye*-see-ee; What do you do for living? *Literally:* What's your job?) Interestingly, the very construction of this question reveals that in the Russian mentality, your profession is an expression of who you are as a person.

To answer the question about your profession, you just need the phrase **Ya** + your profession, as in **Ya yurist** (ya yoo-*reest*; I am a lawyer) or **Ya pryepodavatyel'** (ya pree-puh-duh-*vah*-teel'; I am a professor). Below is a list of the most common professions. Find the one that best fits you:

- **agyent po nyedvizhimosti** (uh-*gyent* puh need-*vee*-zhih-muhs-tee; real estate agent)
- **aktrisa** (ahk-*tree*-suh; actress)
- **aktyor** (ahk-*tyor*; male actor)
- **archityektor** (uhr-khee-*tyek*-tuhr; architect)
- **bibliotyekar'** (beeb-lee-ah-*tye*-kuhr'; librarian)
- **biznyesmyen** (beez-nehs-*myen*; businessman)
- **biznyesmyenka** (beez-nehs-*myen*-kuh; businesswoman)
- **bukhgaltyer** (bookh-*gahl*-teer; accountant)
- **domokhozyajka** (duh-muh-khah-*zyahy*-kuh; homemaker)
- **inzhyenyer** (een-zhee-*nyer*; engineer)
- **khudozhnik** (khoo-*dohzh*-neek; artist, painter)
- **muzykant** (moo-zih-*kahnt*; musician)
- **myedbrat** (meed-*braht*; male nurse)
- **myedsyestra** (meed-sees-*trah*; female nurse)
- **myenyedzhyer** (*meh*-need-zhehr; manager)
- **pisatyel'** (pee-*sah*-teel'; author, writer)

- **programmist** (pruh-gruh-*meest*; programmer)
- **pryepodavatyel'** (pree-puh-duh-*vah*-teel'; professor at the university)
- **studyent** (stoo-*dyent*; male student)
- **studyentka** (stoo-*dyent*-kuh; female student)
- **uchityel'**(oo-*chee*-teel'; male teacher)
- **uchityel'nitsa** (oo-*chee*-teel'-nee-tsuh; female teacher)
- **vospitatyel'** (vuhs-pee-*tah*-teel'; preschool teacher)
- **vrach** (vrahch; physician)
- **yurist** (yu-*reest*; attorney, lawyer)
- **zhurnalist** (zhoor-nuh-*leest*; journalist)
- **zunbnoj vrach** (zoob-*noy* vrahch; dentist)

Some professions have female versions, some are used for both men and women, and some have only male versions.

You can also specify where you work. Russian doesn't have an equivalent for the English "I work for United" or "He works for FedEx." Instead of *for,* Russian uses its equivalent of *at* — prepositions **v** or **na.** Rather than saying "I work for United," a Russian says "I work at United."



The Russian prepositions **v** and **na** (at) require that the noun denoting a place should take the prepositional case. Here are some of the most common places people work. We include the right preposition and prepositional case, so you can start telling people where you work right away. Say **Ya rabotayu . . .** (ya rah-*boh*-tuh-yu; I work . . .) plus one of these phrases:

- **doma** (*doh*-muh; from home)
- **na fabrikye** (nuh *fah*-bree-kee; at a light-industry factory)
- **na zavodye** (nuh zah-*vohd*-ee; at a heavy-industry plant)
- **v bankye** (v *bahn*-kee; at a bank)
- **v bibliotyekye** (v beeb-lee-ah-*tye*-kee; in a library)
- **v bol'nitsye** (v bahl'-*nee*-tsee; at a hospital)
- **v byuro nyedvizhimosti** (v byu-*roh* need-*vee*-zhih-muhs-tee; at a real estate agency)
- **v kommyerchyeskoj firmye** (f kah-*myer*-chees-kuhy *feer*-mee; at a business firm, company)
- **v laboratorii** (v luh-buh-ruh-*toh*-ree-ee; in a laboratory)
- **v magazinye** (v muh-guh-*zee*-nee; at a store)

- **v shkolye** (f *shkoh*-lee; at school)
- **v uchryezhdyenii** (v ooch-reezh-*dye*-nee-ee; at an office)
- **v univyersityetye** (v oo-nee-veer-see-*tye*-tee; at a university)
- **v yuridichyeskoj firmye** (v yu-ree-*dee*-chees-kuhy *feer*-mee; at a law firm)

Let's Get Together: Giving and Receiving Contact Information



Just before you're about to take your leave from a new Russian acquaintance, you probably want to exchange contact information. The easiest way to do this is just hand over your business card and say **Eto moya kartochka** (*eh*-tuh mah-*yah kahr*-tuhch-kuh; This is my card). In case you don't have a business card, you need to know these phrases:

- **Moj adryes . . .** (mohy *ah*-drees; My address is . . .)
- **Moya ulitsa . . .** (mah-*ya oo*-lee-tsuh; My street is . . .)
- **Moj nomyer doma . . .** (mohy *noh*-meer *doh*-muh; My house number is . . .)
- **Moj indyeks . . .** (mohy *een*-dehks; My zip code is . . .)

And nothing's easier than giving your phone number if you know your Russian numerals! (For more numerals, see Chapter 2.) Just say **Moj nomyer tyelyefona** (moy *noh*-mer tee-lee-*fohn*-uh; My telephone number is . . .) and the right numerals: **Moj nomer tyelyefona 555 12 34.** (moy *noh*-mer tee-lee-*fohn*-uh pyat' pyat' pyat' ah-*deen* dvah tree chee-*tih*-ree; My telephone number is 555 12 34.)



Russian telephone numbers are always written and spoken as XXX-XX-XX. For more information about telephone calls, see Chapter 9.

After you give your contact info, be sure to get your new friend's address, phone number, and e-mail address. You can use these phrases:

- **Kakoj u vas nomyer tyelyefona?** (kuh-*kohy* oo vahs *noh*-meer tee-lee-*foh*-nuh; What's your phone number?)
- **Kakoj u vas adryes?** (kuh-*kohy* oo vahs *ahd*-rees; What's your address?)
- **Kakoj u vas adryes po imyeilu?** (kuh-*kohy* oo vahs *ahd*-rees puh ee-*meh*-ee-loo; What's your e-mail address?)

To answer these questions, you simply say

- **Moi nomyer tyelyefona . . .** (mohy *noh*-meer tee-lee-*foh*-nuh; My telephone number is . . .)
- **Moi adryes . . .** (mohy *ahd*-rees; My address is . . .)
- **Moj adryes po imyeilu . . .** (mohy *ahd*-rees puh ee-*meh*-ee-loo; My e-mail address is . . .)

I'm Sorry! Explaining that You Don't Understand Something



When you first start conversing in Russian, there will probably be a lot you don't understand. You can signal that you don't understand something in several ways. Choose the phrase you like best, or use them all to really get the message across:

- **Izvinitye, ya nye ponyal.** (eez-vee-*nee*-tee ya nee *pohh*-nyel; Sorry, I didn't understand; masculine)
- **Izvinitye, ya nye ponyala.** (eez-vee-*nee*-tee ya nee puh-nye-*lah*; Sorry, I didn't understand; feminine)
- **Izvinitye, ya plokho ponimayu po-russki.** (eez-vee-*nee*-tee ya *ploh*-khuh puh-nee-*mah*-yu pah-*roos*-kee; Sorry, I don't understand Russian very well.)
- **Govoritye, pozhalujsta, myedlyennyeye!** (guh-vah-*ree*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh *myed*-lee-nee-ee; Speak more slowly, please!)
- **Kak vy skazali?** (kahk vih skuh-*zah*-lee; What did you say?)
- **Povtoritye, pozhalujsta.** (puhf-tah-*ree*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh; Could you please repeat that?)
- **Vy govoritye po-anglijski?** (vih guh-vah-*ree*-tee puh uhn-*gleey*-skee; Do you speak English?)



Which of the two words indicates a woman? See the answers in Appendix C.

1. a. **amyerikanyets** b. **amyerikanka**
2. a. **russkiye** b. **russkaya**
3. a. **nyemtsy** b. **nyemka**
4. a. **yevryejka** b. **yevryej**
5. a. **frantsuzhyenka** b. **frantsuz**

Which of the three words doesn't belong to the group? Check out the answers in Appendix C.

1. **plyemyannik**, **syestra**, **brat**
2. **dyeduska**, **babushka**, **otyets**
3. **mat'**, **doch'**, **otyets**
4. **vnuchka**, **babushka**, **vnuk**
5. **syestra**, **brat**, **otyets**

Which of the following statements just doesn't make sense? (The word **rabotayet** (ruh-*boh*-tuh-eet) means "works.") See the answers in Appendix C.

1. **Aktyor rabotayet v teatrye.**
2. **Aktrisa rabotayet v teatrye.**
3. **Profyessor rabotayet v univyersityetye.**
4. **Domokhozyajka rabotayet na fabrikye.**
5. **Inzhyenyer rabotayet na zavodye.**

Chapter 5

Making a Fuss about Food

In This Chapter

- Talking about food fundamentals
- Eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner
- Shopping for food
- Dining in restaurants and cafés

Russians are famous for their bountiful cuisine. Whether you like home-made food or prefer to go out to Russian restaurants, knowing how to talk about food is helpful. In this chapter, we dish up a hearty helping of words and phrases for expressing hunger and thirst, using eating utensils, and observing Russian food etiquette. We discuss the different meals of the day and the famous Russian farmer's market. We also discuss places to eat out, and what to say and do when you're there.

Focusing on Food Basics

Because food has always been such an important part of Russian culture, Russian has a rich variety of words and expressions related to eating and drinking. In this section, we tell you how to say you're thirsty and hungry in Russian, how to talk about the different eating utensils, and give you an overview of basic Russian table etiquette.

Eating up



When Russians are hungry they don't say "I'm hungry." Instead they say **Ya khochu yest'.** (ya khah-*choo* yest'; I'm hungry, *Literally:* I want to eat.) If you want to ask somebody if they're hungry, you say:

- **Ty khochyesh' yest'?** (tih *khoh*-cheesh' yest'; Are you hungry? *Literally:* Do you want to eat?; informal)
- **Vy khotitye yest'?** (vih khah-*tee*-tee yest'; Are you hungry? *Literally:* Do you want to eat?; formal and plural)

In addition to these expressions, you may also hear one of these phrases:

- **Vy golodnyj?** (vih gah-*lohd*-nihy; Are you hungry?), when speaking to a male
- **Vy golodnaya?** (vih gah-*lohd*-nuh-ye; Are you hungry?), when speaking to a female
- **Vy golodnyye?** (vih gah-*lohd*-nih-ee; Are you hungry?), when speaking to multiple people

To answer these questions, you say:

- **Ya golodnyj** (ya gah-*lohd*-nihy; I'm hungry), if you're male
- **Ya golodnaya** (ya gah-*lohd*-nuh-ye; I'm hungry), if you're female



Note that these phrases, however, have a particular flavor. In Russia **golod** (*goh*-luht; hunger) is a word that carries tragic historical connotations. So while it's perfectly acceptable to use the above expressions, you should know that they also carry this darker, secondary meaning.

Table 5-1 shows you how to conjugate the Russian verb **yest'** (yest'; to eat) for all the different pronouns. It's an irregular verb, so you just have to memorize it. (For more on regular verb conjugations, see Chapter 2.)

Table 5-1 Conjugation of Yest'

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya yem	ya yem	I eat or I am eating
ty yesh'	tih yesh'	You eat or You are eating (informal singular)
on/ona/ono yest	ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh* yest	He/she/it eats or He/she/it is eating
my yedim	mih ee-*deem*	We eat or We are eating
vy yeditye	vih ee-*dee*-tee	You eat or You are eating (formal singular and plural)
oni yedyat	ah-*nee* -ee-*dyat*	They eat or They are eating

Drinking up



If you feel thirsty, you say **Ya khochu pit'** (ya khah-*choo* peet'; I'm thirsty, *Literally:* I want to drink). When you want to ask somebody whether they're thirsty, you say **Ty khochyesh' pit'?** (tih *khoh*-cheesh' peet'; Are you thirsty? *Literally:* Do you want to drink?; informal) or **Vy khotitye pit'?** (vih khah-*tee*-tee peet'; Are you thirsty? *Literally*: Do you want to drink?; formal)

The drinking verb **pit'** (peet'; to drink) has an unruly conjugation, as shown in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2 Conjugation of Pit'

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya p'yu	ya p'yu	I drink or I am drinking
ty p'yosh'	tih p'yosh'	You drink or You are drinking (informal singular)
on/ona/ono p'yot	ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh* p'yot	He/she/it drinks or He/she/it is drinking
my p'yom	mih p'yom	We drink or We are drinking
vy p'yotye	vih *p'yo*-tee	You drink or You are drinking (formal singular and plural)
oni p'yut	ah-*nee* p'yut	They drink or They are drinking



Just as in English, the Russian statement **On/ona p'yot** (ohn/ah-*nah* p'yot; He/she drinks) in certain contexts can signify that the person is an alcoholic. If that's not your intention, you may want to add a direct object to the sentence to clarify your meaning.

Some common **napitki** (nuh-*peet*-kee; beverages) you may use as the direct objects are **sok** (sohk; juice), **chaj** (chahy; tea), **kofye** (*koh*-fye; coffee), **vodka** (*voht*-kuh; vodka), **pivo** (*pee*-vuh; beer), **vino** (vee-*noh*; wine), and a famous Russian **kvas** (kvahs) — a nonalcoholic beverage made of bread.

To say "I drink coffee" in Russian, you say **Ya p'yu kofye** (yah p'yu *koh*-fye). "I'm drinking vodka" is **Ya p'yu vodku** (yah p'yu *voht'*-koo). Notice that in this sentence **vodka** become **vodku,** the accusative case form of the noun, because it's the direct object of the sentence. (For more on using the accusative case with direct objects, see Chapter 2.)



Making room for the Russian tea tradition

The famous Russian tradition called **chayepitiye** (chah-ee-*pee*-tee-ye) is derived of two words — **chaj** (chahy; tea) and the noun **pitiye** (*pee*-tee-ye; drinking). Russians love tea almost like Brits do and drink it in huge quantities, usually in big glasses. In the old days, they used a **samovar** (suh-mah-*vahr*) — a special, huge teakettle, placed in the middle of the table. Russians usually drink tea with **sakhar** (*sah*-khuhr; sugar) and homemade berry preserves called **varayen'ye** (vah-*ryen*-ye).

Using utensils and tableware



Here's a list of the most common eating utensils and tableware:

- **blyudyechko** (*blyu*-deech-kuh; tea plate)
- **chashka** (*chahsh*-kuh; cup)
- **chaynaya lozhka** or **lozhyechka** (*chahy*-nuh-ye *lohsh*-kuh or *loh*-zhihch-kuh; teaspoon)
- **glubokaya taryelka** (gloo-*boh*-kuh-ye tuh-*ryel*-kuh; soup bowl)
- **kruzhka** (*kroosh*-kuh; mug)
- **lozhka** (*lohsh*-kuh; spoon)
- **nozh** (nohsh; knife)
- **salfyetka** (sahl-*fyet*-kuh; napkin)
- **stakan** (stuh-*kahn*; glass)
- **taryelka** (tah-*ryel*-kuh; plate)
- **vilka** (*veel*-kuh; fork)

Imagine that you're about to start eating a bowl of steaming soup but (much to your disappointment) you notice that you don't have a spoon. This is what you may want to say: **U myenya nyet lozhki.** (oo mee-*nya* nyet *lohsh*-kee; I don't have a spoon.)



After **nyet,** Russian uses the genitive case. For more on using **nyet** when expressing a lack of something, see Chapter 4. Chapter 2 has basic info on cases.

If you need to borrow a spoon from someone, you may ask that person by saying **Mozhno lozhku?** (*mohzh*-nuh *lohsh*-koo; Can I have a spoon?)



The construction **Mozhno . . .** (*mohzh*-nuh; Can/May I have . . .) + a noun is quite common in Russian. The noun takes the accusative case.

Minding basic Russian table manners



If you want to impress your Russian acquaintances, you should know basic Russian table manners. Some of the most important rules are related to using table utensils:

- Hold your fork in your left hand at all times, if you use a knife.
- Hold your fork in your right hand if you don't need a knife to cut food. When Russians eat fish, for example, they don't use a knife, and they hold the fork in the right hand.
- When eating dessert, don't use a fork; use a teaspoon instead.



Russians often find the American habit of cutting food into pieces before eating it very amusing. In Russia, only mothers do this for their young children. So when in a Russian restaurant, do as the Russians do. Never cut your food first with your knife and then put down the knife to hold your fork in the right hand. Always hold your knife in the right hand and your fork in the left hand, cutting pieces of food as necessary.

Enjoying Different Meals in Russia

Russians eat three meals a day: **zavtrak** (*zahf*-truhk; breakfast), **obyed** (ah-*byet*; dinner), and **uzhin** (*oo*-zhihn; supper). But Russian meals have quite a few peculiarities, which we tell you about in the following sections. We give you details on the amazingly flexible Russian breakfast, the hearty Russian midday meal, and the Russian dinner. Prepare your taste buds!

Russian for "to cook" is **gotovit'** (gah-*toh*-veet'). So, if cooking is one of your hobbies, you can now proudly say **Ya lyublyu gotovit'** (ya lyub-*lyu* gah-*toh*-veet'; I like/love to cook) when asked **Vy lyubitye gotovit'?** (vih *lyu*-bee-tee gah-*toh*-veet'; Do you like to cook?)

What's for breakfast? Almost anything!



The Russian breakfast is called **zavtrak** (*zahf*-truhk). What can you eat for **zavtrak?** The real question is what *can't* you eat! In contrast to American cereal, fruit, or bagels, or the British porridge, or the French croissant and jam, the Russian **zavtrak** is very flexible. Some Russian breakfast favorites include

- **butyerbrod s kolbasoj** (boo-tehr-*broht* s kuhl-buh-*sohy*; sausage sandwich)
- **butyerbrod s syrom** (boo-tehr-*broht* s *sih*-ruhm; cheese sandwich)
- **kasha** (*kah*-shuh; cooked grain served hot with milk, sugar, and butter)
- **kofye s molokom** (*koh*-fye s muh-lah-*kohm*; coffee with milk)
- **kolbasa** (kuhl-buh-*sah*; sausage)
- **kyefir** (kee-*feer*; buttermilk)
- **syelyodka s kartoshkoj** (see-*lyot*-kuh s kahr-*tohsh*-kuhy; herring with potatoes)
- **varyen'ye** (vuh-*ryen'*-ee; jam)
- **yaichnitsa** (ee-*eesh*-nee-tsuh; fried or scrambled eggs)

The management at Russian hotels in Moscow and St. Petersburg realize that such breakfast dishes as **syelyodka s kartoshkoj** may not appeal to all Western travelers, so the hotels try to accommodate their patrons' tastes. Rest assured that you can get a decent Western-style breakfast in a hotel catering to the needs of Western guests. Use the following words to order Western-style breakfast foods:

- **behkon** (*beh*-kuhn; bacon)
- **bliny** (blee-*nih*; pancakes)
- **kholodnaya kasha** (khah-*lohd*-nuh-ye *kah*-shuh; cereal)
- **kukuruznyye khlop'ya** (koo-koo-*rooz*-nih-ee *khlohp'*-ye; corn flakes)
- **moloko** (muh-lah-*koh*; milk)
- **ovsyanka** (ahf-*syan*-kuh; oatmeal)
- **sok** (sohk; juice)
- **tost** (tohst; toast)
- **yajtsa** (*yay*-tsuh; boiled eggs)

For the sake of fairness, we should mention that Russians share with Westerners their love of **bliny** (pancakes) and **yajtsa** (boiled eggs). **Bliny,** however, isn't a dish exclusive to breakfast in Russia. Also note that you use the word **yajtsa** (*yay*-tsuh; boiled eggs) only in reference to boiled eggs rather than fried or scrambled eggs, which are **yaichnitsa** (ee-*eesh*-nee-tsuh).

Let's do dinner (not lunch)

Obyed (ah-*byet*; dinner) is the main meal of the day and it's usually eaten as a midday meal between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.



Don't make the common mistake of calling your evening meal **obyed,** because this may cause misunderstanding. **Obyed** is, in fact, your midday meal. What speakers of English call "lunch" doesn't have an equivalent in Russian.

For their midday meal, Russians enjoy a four-course meal consisting of **zakuski** (zuh-*koos*-kee; appetizers), **sup** (soop; soup), **vtoroye** (ftah-*roh*-ye; the second or main course), and **dyesyert** (dee-*syert*; dessert), also called **tryet'ye** (*trye*-t'ee; third course).

The most popular Russian **zakuski** are:

- **baklazhannaya ikra** (buh-klah-*zhah*-nuh-ye eek-*rah*; eggplant caviar)
- **kapustnyj salat** (kah-*poost*-nihy suh-*laht*; cabbage salad)
- **salat iz ogurtsov i pomidorov** (suh-*laht* iz ah-goor-*tsohf* ee puh-mee-*doh*-ruhf; salad made of tomatoes and cucumbers)
- **salat olivye** (suh-*laht* uh-lee-*v'ye*; meat salad)
- **studyen'** (*stoo*-deen'; beef in aspic)
- **syelyodka** (see-*lyot*-kuh; salt herring)
- **vinyegryet** (vee-nee-*gryet*; mixed vegetable salad made with beets, carrots, and pickle)
- **vyetchina s goroshkom** (veet-chee-*nah* s gah-*rohsh*-kuhm; ham with peas)

After **zakuski** comes the **sup.** You have many different kinds to choose from:

- **borsh'** (bohrsh'; beet root soup)
- **bul'yon** (bool'-*yon*; broth)
- **kurinyj sup** (koo-*ree*-nihy soop; chicken soup)
- **molochnyj sup** (mah-*lohch*-nihy soop; milk soup)
- **sh'i** (sh'ee; cabbage soup)
- **ukha** (oo-*khah*; fish soup)

After the **sup** comes the main course, usually called **vtoroye** (ftah-*roh*-ee; *Literally:* second course). Here are some typical Russian favorites:

- **bifshtyeks** (beef-*shtehks*; beefsteak)
- **bifstroganov** (behf-*stroh*-guh-nuhf; beef Stroganoff)
- **gamburgyer** (gahm-*boor*-geer; hamburger) Russians are still getting used to this one, but they do prefer **kotlyety** to **gamburgyery;** old habits die hard
- **golubtsy** (guh-loop-*tsih*; stuffed cabbage rolls)
- **griby** (gree-*bih*; mushrooms)
- **kotlyety** (kaht-*lye*-tih; ground meat patties)
- **kotlyety s kartoshkoj** (kaht-*lye*-tih s kuhr-*tohsh*-kuhy; meat patty with potatoes)
- **kuritsa** (*koo*-ree-tsuh; chicken)
- **makarony** (muh-kuh-*roh*-nih; pasta)
- **pitsa** (*pee*-tsuh; pizza) This one is a relative novelty in Russian cuisine.
- **pyechyen'** (*pye*-cheen'; liver)
- **ryba** (*rih*-buh; fish)
- **schnitzyel'** (*shnee*-tsehl'; schnitzel)
- **sosiski** (sah-*sees*-kee; frankfurters)
- **zharkoye** (zhuhr-*koh*-ee; any meat cooked in oven)

The main course is usually served with **kartoshka** (kuhr-*tohsh*-kuh; potatoes), **makarony** (muh-kuh-*roh*-nih; pasta), and **ris** (rees; rice), and it's always served with **khlyeb** (khlep; bread).

After the main course comes **dyesyert** (dee-*syert*; dessert), or **tryet'ye** (*trye*-t'ee; third course). This course usually consists of some kind of **tort** (tohrt; cake) or a sweet drink called **kompot** (kahm-*poht*; compote) or **kisyel'** (kee-*syel'*; drink made of fruit and starch). Another common dessert favorite is **morozhenoye** (mah-*roh*-zhih-nuh-ee; ice-cream).

For those who insist on Western-style dessert, you can find **pyechyen'ye** (pee-*chyen'*-ee; cookies), **pirog** (pee-*rohk*; pie), and **tort** (tohrt; cake).

Some typical beverages that Russians drink in the middle of the day are **sok** (sohk; juice), **chaj** (chahy; tea), **kofye** (*koh*-fye; coffee), and **voda** (vah-*dah*; water), although the latter doesn't enjoy as much popularity as it does in the U.S., for example.

A simple supper



The last meal of the day is called **uzhin** (*oo*-zhihn; supper), and it's usually eaten with the family around the kitchen or dining room table. Just as with **obyed** (dinner; see the previous section), soup and a main course are often served for **uzhin. Butyerbrody** (boo-tehr-*broh*-dih; open-sided sandwiches) may also be served, and several cups of **chaj** (chahy; tea) often conclude the evening meal. Some other Russian supper favorites include:

- **blinchiki** (*bleen*-chee-kee; crepes)
- **pyel'myeni** (peel'-*mye*-nee; Russian ravioli)
- **syrniki** (*sihr*-nee-kee; patties made of cottage cheese)
- **tvorog so smyetanoj** (*tvoh*-ruhk suh smee-*tah*-nuhy; cottage cheese with sour cream)



Russians believe that breakfast, the most important meal of the day, should be plentiful, while supper should be light. Russian folk wisdom says: "Eat your breakfast yourself, share your dinner with a friend, give your supper to your enemy." Gosh, with enemies like that, who needs friends? As for suppertime beverages, **chaj** (chahy; tea) is certainly the most popular drink. A very healthy habit is having a glass of **kyefir** (kee-*feer*; buttermilk) before going to bed. Contrary to Westerners' beliefs, Russians don't drink alcoholic drinks with supper unless it's a very special occasion.

Talkin' the Talk



Syeryozha came home early from school because he has a stomachache. His mother is concerned that it may be food poisoning.

Syeryozha's mother: **Syeryozha, pochyemu ty tak rano prishyol iz shkoly? Chto sluchilos'?**
see-*ryo*-zhuh, puh-chee-*moo* tih tahk *rah*-nuh pree-*shohl* ees *shkoh*-lih? shtoh sloo-*chee*-luhs'?
Syeryozha, why did you come from school so early? What happened?

Syeryozha: **Mama, u myenya bolit zhivot.**
mah-muh, oo mee-*nya* bah-*leet* zhih-*voht.*
Mom, I have a stomachache.

Syeryozha's mother: **Zhivot? Chto ty syegodnya yel na zavtrak?**

	zhih-*voht*? shtoh tih see-*vohd*-nye yel nuh *zahf*-truhk? Stomachache? What did you have for breakfast today?
Syeryozha:	**Ya yel kashu i pil moloko.** ya yel *kah*-shoo ee peel muh-lah-*koh.* I had hot cereal and drank milk.
Syeryozha's mother:	**A chto ty yel v shkolye na obyed?** uh shtoh tih yel f *shkoh*-lee nuh ah-*byet*? And what did you eat for lunch at school?
Syeryozha:	**Na obyed ya yel salat, kotlyety s kartoshkoj i pil kisyel'.** nuh ah-*byet* ya yel suh-*laht*, kaht-*lye*-tih s kahr-*tohsh*-kuhy ee peel kee-*syel'.* For lunch I had salad, meat patty with potatoes, and drank kissel.
Syeryozha's mother:	**A chto tih yel na pyervoye?** uh shtoh tih yel nuh *pyer*-vuh-ee? And what did you eat for the first course?
Syeryozha:	**Ya, nichyego nye yel. Ya nye khotyel sup.** ya nee-chee-*voh* nee yel. ya nee khah-*tyel* soop. I did not eat anything. I did not want to eat soup.
Syeryozha's mother:	**Syeryozha, ty dolzhyen yest' sup kazhdyj dyen'. Mozhyet byt' u tyebya bolit zhivot, potomu chto ty nye yesh' sup. Ty khochyesh yest'?** see-*ryo*-zhuh, tih *dohl*-zhihn yest' soop *kahzh*-dihy dyen'. *moh*-zhiht biht' oo tee-*bya* bah-*leet* zhih-*voht,* puh-tah-*moosh*-tuh tih nee yesh' soop. tih *khoh*-cheesh yest'? Syeryozha, you have to eat soup every day. Maybe you have a stomachache because you don't eat soup. Are you hungry?
Syeryozha:	**Nyet, ya nye khochu yest' sup. Ya khochu pit'.** nyet, ya nee khah-*choo* yest' soop. ya khah-*choo* peet'. No, I don't want soup. I'm thirsty.

Syeryozha's mother:	**Chto ty khochyesh' pit'? Ty khochyesh' chaj?** shtoh tih *khoh*-cheesh' peet'? tih *khoh*-cheesh' chahy? What do you want to drink? Do you want tea?
Syeryozha:	**Da, khochu.** dah khah-*choo.* Yes, I do.
Syeryozha's mother:	**Khorosho, syejchas ya sdyelayu chaj.** khuh-rah-*shoh,* see-*chahs* ya *sdye*-luh-yu chahy. Okay. I'll make tea.

Words to Know

Chto sluchilos'?	shtoh sloo-chee-luhs'	What happened?
U myenya bolit zhivot.	oo mee-nya bah-leet zhih-voht	I have a stomachache.
Iz shkoly	ees shkoh-lih	From school
Chto ty yel?	shtoh tih yel	What did you eat?
Na zavtrak	nuh zahf-truhk	For breakfast
Na obyed	nuh ah-byet	For lunch
Na pyervoye	nuh pyer-vuh-ee	For the main course
Ya nichyego nye yel.	ya nee-chee-voh nee yel	I didn't eat anything.
Mozhyet byt'	moh-zhiht biht'	Maybe
Potomu chto	puh-tah-moo-shtuh	Because
Chto ty khochyesh' pit'?	shtoh tih khoh-cheesh' peet'?	What do you want to drink?

Going Out for Groceries

If you want to make a quick trip to the **produktovyyj magazin** (pruh-dook-*toh*-vihy muh-guh-*zeen*; grocery store) or spend a leisurely day at the Russian **rynok** (*rih*-nuhk; market), you have to know how to buy food products in Russian. In the following sections, we tell you all the different things you can buy.

Picking out produce



Buying produce at a farmer's market is very common. Russians are convinced that produce is much fresher there than in regular grocery stores. Table 5-3 has a list of some of the more popular produce items you may want to buy:

Table 5-3 Produce

Russian	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
yabloki	*ya*-bluh-kee	Apple
svyokla	*svyok*-luh	Beets
chyernika	cheer-*nee*-kuh	Blueberry
kapusta	kuh-*poos*-tuh	Cabbage
morkov'	mahr-*kohf'*	Carrots
vishnya	*veesh*-nye	Cherry
ogurtsy	uh-goor-*tsih*	Cucumber
balkazhany	buhk-luh-*zhah-nih*	Eggplant
chyesnok	chees-*nohk*	Garlic
vinograd	vee-nah-*grahd*	Grape
luk	look	Onion
grushi	*groo*-shih	Pears
gorokh	guh-*rohkh*	Peas
pyeryets	*pye*-reets	Pepper
ryediska	ree-*dees*-kuh	Radish
malina	muh-*lee*-nuh	Raspberry
klubnika	kloob-*nee*-kuh	Strawberry

Russian	Pronunciation	Translation
pomidory	puh-mee-*doh*-rih	Tomato
arbuz	uhr-*boos*	Watermelon

Surveying other grocery items



Chances are, most of the food items you want to buy can be found at the **rynok,** but you can also buy the food products you need at **produktovyye magaziny** (pruh-dook-*toh*-vih-ee muh-gah-*zee*-nih; grocery stores). We list some of the most common food items in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4 Common Food Items

Russian	Pronunciation	Translation
myaso	*mya*-suh	Meat
govyadina	gah-*vya*-dee-nuh	Beef
farsh	fahrsh	Ground beef
kuritsa	*koo*-ree-tsuh	Chicken
ryba	*rih*-buh	Fish
vyetchina	veet-chee-*nah*	Ham
baranina	buh-*rah*-nee-nuh	Lamb
svinina	svee-*nee*-nuh	Pork
kolbasa	kuhl-buh-*sah*	Sausage
maslo	*mahs*-luh	Butter
kyefir	kee-*feer*	Buttermilk
syr	sihr	Cheese
yajtsa	*yahy*-tsuh	Eggs
moloko	muh-lah-*koh*	Milk
smyetana	smee-*tah*-nuh	Sour cream
jogurt	*yo*-goort	Yogurt
bubliki	*boob*-lee-kee	Bagels

(continued)

Table 5-4 *(continued)*

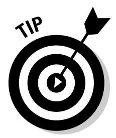
Russian	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
khlyeb	khlyep	Bread
chyornyj khlyeb	*chyor*-nihy khlyep	Dark bread
bulka	*bool*-kuh	White bread
kofye	*koh*-fye	Coffee
sok	sohk	Juice
chaj	chahy	Tea
voda	vah-*dah*	Water
muka	moo-*kah*	Flour
majonyez	muh-ee-*nehs*	Mayonnaise
gorchitsa	gahr-*chee*-tsuh	Mustard
makarony	muh-kuh-*roh*-nih	Pasta
pyeryets	*pye*-reets	Pepper
ris	rees	Rice
sol'	sohl'	Salt
sakhar	*sah*-khuhr	Sugar
podsolnechnoye maslo	paht-*sohl*-neech-nuh-ee *mahs*-luh	Sunflower oil

Eating Out with Ease

Eating out at Russian restaurants and cafes can be a lot of fun, especially if you know Russian. In the following sections, we go over the different kinds of restaurants you can go to, how to reserve your table, the right way to order a meal, and how to pay your bill.

Deciding on a place to eat

You can find lots of different places to eat out, Russian-style, depending on your mood and budget. If you're in the mood for a night of culinary delights, with a full eight-course meal, lots of drinks, and live music, check out a fancy Russian **ryestoran** (ree-stah-*rahn*; restaurant). Be sure you have a healthy budget and are well-rested, because prices are steep and you won't be coming home 'til the wee hours of the morning!



A more affordable everyday option is a **kafye** (kuh-*feh*; café), which can serve anything from coffee and ice-cream, to pancakes, to pies. Cafés are usually privately owned and have such interesting names (often unrelated to food) that if you pass one of them on the street, you may not even recognize it as a place to eat! But if you follow that delicious smell under your nose, you may wind up at one of these delightful little places:

- **blinnaya** (*blee*-nuh-ye; café that serves pancakes)
- **chyeburyechnya** (chee-boo-*ryech*-nuh-ye; café that serves meat pies)
- **kafye-morozhenoye** (kuh-*feh* mah-*roh*-zhih-nuh-ee; ice-cream parlor)
- **pirozhkovya** (pee-rahsh-*koh*-vuh-ye; café that serves small pies)
- **pyel'myennya** (*peel'*-myen-nuh-ye; place that serves Russian ravioli)
- **pyshyechnaya** (*pih*-shihch-nuh-ye; donut shop)
- **stolovaya** (stah-*loh*-vuh-ye; dining room)
- **zakusochnaya** (zuh-*koo*-suhch-nuh-ye; snack bar)

Making reservations on the phone



After you decide which restaurant to go to, pick up the phone and make a reservation. And don't worry. The person answering the phone has probably dealt quite often with customers whose Russian isn't perfect. He or she will be happy to help you:

- If you're a man, say, **Ya khotyel by zakazat' stolik na syegodnya.** (ya khah-*tyel* bih zuh-kuh-*zaht' stoh*-leek nuh see-*vohd*-nye; I'd like to reserve a table for tonight.)
- If you're a woman, say, **Ya khotyela by zakazat' stolik na syegodnya.** (ya khah-*tye*-luh bih zuh-kuh-*zaht' stoh*-leek nuh see-*vohd*-nye; I'd like to reserve a table for tonight.)



When you say **ya khotyel(a) by,** you're using Russian subjunctive mood. It's one of the easiest things in Russian grammar. You just use the past tense of the verb + the word **by.** (For more on forming past tense, see Chapter 2.) Instead of saying the word **stol** (stohl; table), Russians like to use the diminutive form **stolik** (*stoh*-leek; *Literally:* little table) when making restaurant reservations.

If you want to reserve a table for tomorrow, just replace the phrase **na syegodnya** (nuh see-*vohd*-nye; for today) with the phrase **na zavtra** (nuh *zahf*-truh; for tomorrow). If you want to specify a day of the week, use the same preposition **na** + the day of the week in accusative case. (See Chapter 7 for the days of the week.) So if you want to make a reservation for Saturday and you're a male, you say **Ya khotyel by zakazat' stolik na subbotu.** (ya khah-*tyel* bih zuh-kuh-*zaht' stoh*-leek nuh soo-*boh*-too; I'd like to reserve a table for Saturday.)

What you'll probably hear in response is **Na skol'ko chyelovyek?** (nuh *skohl'*-kuh chee-luh-*vyek*?; For how many people?) To answer this question, decide (quickly, Russians are very impatient on the phone!) how many people are accompanying you, add yourself, and after these quick calculations say one of these phrases:

- **na dvoikh** (nuh dvah-*eekh*; for two)
- **na troikh** (nuh trah-*eekh*; for three)
- **na chyetvyerykh** (nuh cheet-vee-*rihkh*; for four)
- **na odnogo** (nuh uhd-nah-*voh*; for one person)

The person on the phone will probably want to know by what time the table should be ready for you, and he or she will ask **Na kakoye vryemya?** (nuh kah-*koh*-ee *vrye*-mye; For what time?) To answer this question, use the preposition **na** (nah; for) + the time when you're planning to arrive:

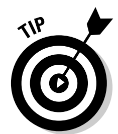
- **na syem' chasov** (nuh syem' chah-*sohf*; for 7 o'clock)
- **na vosyem' chasov** (nuh *voh*-seem' chah-*sohf*; for 8 o'clock)

(For more info on specifying the time, see Chapter 7.) Also be prepared to give your name, which you do by simply stating it.

Don't expect to be asked whether you want to sit in the smoking or non-smoking section. Too many people in Russia smoke (especially when drinking alcoholic beverages) and smokers rule. Even those people who don't generally smoke tend to smoke in restaurants.

The art of ordering a meal

After you arrive at the restaurant and are seated by **myetrdotyel'** (mehtr-dah-*tyel*; maitre d'), the **ofitsiant** (uh-fee-tsih-*ahnt*; waiter) or **ofitsiantka** (uh-fee-tsih-*ahnt*-kuh; waitress) will bring you a **myenyu** (mee-*nyu*; menu). In a nice restaurant, all the dishes in the menu are usually in English as well as Russian.



When you open the menu, you'll notice it's divided into several subsections, which is how items are usually eaten and ordered in a Russian restaurant:

- **zakuski** (zuh-*koos*-kee; appetizers)
- **supy** (soo-*pih*; soups)
- **goryachiye blyuda** (gah-*rya*-chee-ee *blyu*-duh; main dishes)
- **sladkiye blyuda** (*slaht*-kee-ee *blyu*-duh; dessert)
- **alkogol'nye napitki** (ahl-kah-*gohl'*-nih-ee nuh-*peet*-kee; alcoholic drinks)
- **bezalkogol'niye napitki** (beez-uhl-kah-*gohl'*-nih-ee nuh-*peet*-kee; nonalcoholic beverages)

When the waiter asks you **Chto vy budyetye zakazyvat'?** (shtoh vih *boo*-dee-tee zuh-*kah*-zih-vuht'; What would you like to order?), just say **Ya budu** + the name of the item you're ordering in the accusative case. (On forming the accusative, see Chapter 2.) For example, you may say something like: **Ya budu kotlyetu s kartofyelyem i salat iz pomidorov.** (ya *boo*-doo kaht-*lye*-tih s kahr-*toh*-fee-leem ee suh-*laht* ees puh-mee-*doh*-ruhf; I'll have meat patty with potatoes and tomato salad.)

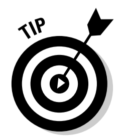
The waiter may also ask you specifically **Chto vy budyetye pit'?** (shtoh vih *boo*-dee-tee peet'; What would you like to drink?) To answer, you simply say **Ya budu** (ya *boo*-doo; I will have) + the name of the drink(s) you want in the accusative case. So, if at dinner you're extremely thirsty (and aren't the designated driver), you may say **Ya budu vodku i sok i butylku vina.** (ya *boo*-doo *voht*-koo ee sohk ee boo-*tihl*-koo vee-*nah*; I'll have vodka and juice and a bottle of wine.) For details on the accusative case, see Chapter 2.



Waiters and waitresses don't take your drink orders before you start ordering meals; expect to be asked what you want to drink at the end of your order. Moreover, when the waiter asks this question, he's asking about alcoholic beverages. Water or soda with your meal isn't as common as it is in the West. As a matter of fact, many Russians believe that one shouldn't chase food with water or any other beverage because it interferes with food digestion.



When you say **Ya budu** + the food or drink item, what you're really saying is **Ya budu yest' . . .** (ya *boo*-doo yest'; I will eat . . .) or **Ya budu pit' . . .** (ya *boo*-doo peet'; I will drink . . .) The verbs **yest'** (yest'; to eat) and **pit'** (peet'; to drink) force the noun coming after them into the accusative case, because it's a direct object. When you order, you skip the verbs **yest'** and **pit',** but they're implied. (On uses of the accusative case, see Chapter 2.)



When you're done ordering, you should say **Vsyo!** (fsyo; That's it!) Otherwise, the waiter will keep standing next to you, waiting for you to order more.

Having handy phrases for the wait staff

In this section, we include some helpful phrases you may want to use when ordering or receiving a meal or drinks.

If you're a vegetarian, the best way to ask about vegetarian dishes is to say: **Kakiye u vas yest' vyegyetarianskiye blyuda?** (kuh-*kee*-ee oo vahs yest' vee-gee-tuh-ree-*ahns*-kee-ee *blyu*-duh; What vegetarian dishes do you have?) Note, however, that being a vegetarian in Russia is still seen as a very bizarre habit.

Imagine that you're a vegetarian and you're sitting in a restaurant waiting for the vegetarian dish you ordered. Instead, the waiter puts in front of you a steaming, juicy beefsteak with potatoes. What do you do? Before that waiter is gone, say **Ya eto nye zakazyval/zakazyvala!** (ya *eh*-tuh nee zuh-*kah*-zih-vuhl/zuh-*kah*-zih-vuh-luh; I did not order this!) (Use **zakazyval** if you're a man, and **zakazyvala** if you're a woman.)

If you feel like asking a waiter what dish he or she recommends or what specialties the restaurant has, be cautioned that your questions may puzzle your Russian server. Only waiters in very nice Moscow restaurants that are trying to emulate their Western counterparts are prepared to answer them. Here is the question you may want to attempt: **A chto vy ryekomyenduyetye?** (uh shtoh vih ree-kuh-meen-*doo*-ee-tee; What would you recommend?)

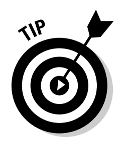
If you suddenly recall something you meant to include in your order or decide that you want something else, try getting the attention of your waiter (who is rushing by you) with a phrase like **Izvinitye, vy nye mogli by prinyesti vodu?** (eez-vee-*nee*-tee vih nee mahg-*lee* bih pree-nees-*tee voh*-doo; Excuse me, could you bring water?)

Other common problems you may come across can be resolved just by stating some facts about the meal that alert the waiter and make him take some counter-measures. For example, you may say:

- **Eto blyudo ochyen' kholodnoye.** (*eh*-tuh *blyu*-duh *oh*-cheen' khah-*lohd*-nuh-ye; This dish is very cold.)
- **Eto blyudo ochyen' solyonoye.** (*eh*-tuh *blyu*-duh *oh*-cheen' sah-*lyo*-nuh-ye; This dish is too salty.)
- **Eto blyudo ochyen' ostroye.** (*eh*-tuh *blyu*-duh *oh*-cheen' *ohs*-truh-ye; This dish is too spicy.)

If, on the other hand, you enjoyed your meal and service, be sure to say **Vsyo bylo ochyen' vkusno!** (vsyo *bih*-luh *oh*-cheen' *fkoos*-nuh; Everything was very tasty!) and/or **Spasibo za otlichnyj syervis!** (spuh-*see*-buh zah aht-*leech*-nihy *syer*-vees; Thank you for the excellent service!)

Receiving and paying the bill



When it comes time to ask for the bill, don't expect the waiter to bring it automatically. When the waiter is in the vicinity, try to attract his attention either by waving or smiling to him or just saying (loudly, if necessary; Russians are very direct!) **Rasschitajtye nas pozhalujsta!** (ruh-shee-*tahy*-tee nahs pah-*zhahl*-stuh; Check please!)

Asking for several separate checks isn't common in Russia. Waiters hate doing it even in Russian restaurants abroad. So ask for a check and then prepare to divide the amount by the number of eaters. If you're buying a meal for somebody or everybody at the table, announce it to the company or person you're inviting by saying: **Ya zaplachu** (ya zuh-pluh-*choo*; I will pay) or **Ya plachu** (ya pluh-*choo*; I am paying) or **Ya ugosh'yayu** (ya-oo-gah-*sh'a*-yu; *Literally:* My treat).

As in most restaurants in the world, checks aren't accepted in Russia. Before paying with a credit card, we recommend that you ask: **Vy prinimayetye kryeditnyye kartochki?** (vih pree-nee-*mah*-ee-tee kree-*deet*-nih-ee *kahr*-tuhch-kee; Do you take credit cards?)

If the waiter returns before you ask him for the bill, he may tell you how much you owe by saying **S vas . . .** (s vahs; you owe, *Literally:* from you is due . . .) If your meal costs 200 rubles 41 kopecks, the waiter will say **S vas dvyesti rublyej sorok odna kopyejka.** (s vahs *dvyes-tee*-roob-*lyey soh*-ruhk ahd-*nah* kah-*pyey*-kuh; You owe two hundred rubles and forty-one kopeks.) See Chapter 14 for more details about money.

Talkin' the Talk



Jack and his Russian fiancée, Natasha, are in a nice restaurant in downtown Moscow. They have just been seated at the table and are now ordering the meal.

Ofitsiant: (waiter) **Gotovy? Chto vy budyetye zakazyvat'?**
gah-*toh*-vih? shtoh vih *boo*-dee-tee zuh-*kah*-zih-vuht'?
Ready? What will you be ordering?

Jack: **Na zakusku, ya budu kholodnyj yazyk s goroshkom i butyerbrod s ikroj. I shashlyk.**
Nuh zuh-*koos*-koo, ya *boo*-doo khah-*lohd*-nihy ee-*zihk* s gah-*rohsh*-kuhm ee boo-tehr-*broht* s eek-*rohy*. ee shuhsh-*lihk.*
For the appetizer I will have tongue with peas and caviar sandwich. And roasted mutton.

Ofitsiant: **Chto vy budyetye pit'?**
shtoh vih *boo*-dee-tee peet'?
What will you have to drink?

Jack: **Kakoye u vas yest' khoroshyeye vino?**
kuh-*koh*-ee oo vahs yest' khah-*roh*-sheh-ee vee-*noh*?
What good wine do you have?

Ofitsiant: **Yest' risling, yest' khoroshyeye armyanskoye vino.**
yest' *rees*-leenk, yest' khah-*roh*-sheh-ee uhr-*myan*-skuh-ee vee-*noh.*
We have Riesling, we have a nice Armenian wine.

Jack: **Khorosho, prinyesitye butylku armyanskogo vina.**
khuh-rah-*shoh,* pree-nee-*see*-tee boo-*tihl*-koo uhr-*myan*-skuh-vuh vee-*nah.*
Okay. Bring a bottle of Armenian wine.

Ofitsiant: **Yesh'o chto-nibud' budyetye pit'?**
ee-*sh'yo shtoh*-nee-bood' *boo*-dee-tye peet'?
What else are you going to drink?

Jack: **I butylku minyeral'noj vody. Vsyo. Natasha, chto ty budyesh'?**
ee boo-*tihl*-koo mee-nee-*rahl'* -nuhy vah-*dih.* fsyo. nah-*tah*-shuh, shtoh tih *boo*-deesh'?
And a bottle of mineral water. That's it. Natasha, what will you have?

Natasha: **Ya budu syevryugu i kotlyetu po-kiyevski**.
ya *boo*-doo seev-*ryu*-goo ee kaht-*lye*-too puh *kee*-eef-skee.
I'll have sturgeon and chicken a la Kiev.

Ofitsiant: **Vsyo**?
fsyo?
That's it?

Natasha: **Vsyo.**
fsyo.
That's it.

Ofitsiant: **Vy khotitye chto-nibud' na dyesyert**?
vih khah-*tee*-tee *shtoh*-nee-bood' nuh dee-*syert*?
Do you want anything for dessert?

Natasha: **Nyet, spasibo. Tol'ko kofye.**
nyet, spa-*see*-buh. *tohl'*-kuh *koh*-fee.
No, thank you. Only coffee.

Words to Know

Gotovy?	gah-toh-vih	Are you ready (to order)?
na zakusku	nuh zah-koos-koo	as an appetizer
Chto vy budyetye pit'?	shtoh vih boo-dee-tee peet'	What will you drink?
Kakoye u vas yest' khoroshyeye vino?	kuh-koh-ee oo vahs yest' khah-roh-sheh-ee vee-noh	What good wine do you have?
Yest' risling.	yest' rees-link	We have Riesling.
Chto tih budyesh'?	shtoh tih boo-deesh'	What will you have?
Vy khotitye chto-nibud' na dyesyert?	vih khah-tee-tee shtoh-nee-bood' nuh dee-syert	Do you want anything for dessert?
tol'ko	tohl'-kuh	only



Fun & Games

Which of the following two dishes would you most likely eat for breakfast in Russia? See Appendix C for the correct answers.

1. a. **yaichnitsa** b. **ukha**
2. a. **zharkoye** b. **butyerbrod s kolbasoj**
3. a. **butyerbrod s syrom** b. **kotlyeta**
4. a. **kotlyetu s kartofyelyem** b. **kasha**
5. a. **varyen'ye** b. **kapustnyj salat**

Which of the following phrases would you probably use or hear while making a restaurant reservation? See Appendix C for the correct answers.

1. **Ya khotyel by zakazat' stolik na subbotu.**
2. **Mnye, pozhalujsta, butylku moloka.**
3. **Na dvoikh.**
4. **Skol'ko chyelovyek?**
5. **Na vosyem' chasov.**
6. **Ya khochu yest'.**
7. **Ya budu kotlyetu s kartofyelyem.**
8. **Ya khotyela by zakazat' stolik na syegodnya.**
9. **Na kakoye vryemya?**
10. **Yest' risling.**

Chapter 6
Shopping Made Easy

In This Chapter

- Finding out where and how to shop
- Looking for clothes
- Selecting the items you want
- Paying the bill
- Checking out great Russian souvenirs to buy

Shopping is a big part of Russian life. During the Soviet era, when getting even basic things like toothpaste was a major challenge, Russians felt deprived and developed a strong appreciation for any nice things they could buy. As a result, Russians love to hunt for nice, mostly Western-made, goods. Buying anything new, whether it's a stereo, a sofa, or a coat, is a pleasant experience and an important event. So as an American (or other Westerner) shopping in Russian stores, you should feel right at home!

In this chapter, we tell you about different kinds of stores, and show you how to call for store hours and get assistance when you're there. We also instruct you in the art of clothes-shopping, Russian-style. We show you how to get the right color and size, how to ask to try things on, and what to say when you want to compare different items. You also find out how to pay for your things in a Russian store. Plus we give you suggestions about some cool souvenirs to get while you're shopping. Now, let's go shopping!

Shop 'Til You Drop: Where and How to Buy Things the Russian Way



Stores where you can buy anything (other than food) can be divided into two categories: **univyermagi** (oo-nee-veer-*mah*-gee; department stores), most of which are located in the downtown of large cities, and smaller specialized **magaziny** (muh-guh-*zee*-nih; stores), which may specialize in anything from tableware to TVs.

In the following section, you find out about many different kinds of stores and what's sold in them. You also discover how to inquire about store hours, how to find the specific store or department you're looking for, and how to ask for assistance when you're there.

Looking at different types of stores and departments



More and more, fancy specialty stores are popping up throughout Russia and Russian neighborhoods in the U.S. Many of these stores have unique names, but many (especially in Russia) are still simply called by the name of the item they sell. This naming convention is a throwback to the Soviet era, when no concept of marketing products existed. A shoe store, for instance, may simply be called **obuv'** (*oh*-boof'; *Literally:* footwear), a toy store **igrushki** (eeg-*roosh*-kee; *Literally:* toys), and a book store **knigi** (*knee*-gee; *Literally:* books). The names of stores also may denote the name of an **otdyel** (aht-*dyel*; department) within an **univyermag** (oo-nee-veer-*mahk*; department store), where a specific item is sold.



Here's a list of some other stores and departments:

- **antikvarnyj magazin** (uhn-tee-*kvahr*-nihy muh-guh-*zeen*; antique store)
- **aptyeka** (uhp-*tye*-kuh; pharmacy)
- **byel'yo** (beel'-*yo*; intimate apparel)
- **dyetskaya odyezhda** (*dyet*-skuh-ye ah-*dyezh*-duh; children's apparel)
- **elyektrotovary** (eh-*lyek*-truh-tah-*vah*-rih; electrical goods)
- **fototovary** (*foh*-tuh-tah-*vah*-rih; photography store)
- **galantyeryeya** (guh-luhn-tee-*rye*-ye; haberdashery)
- **gazyehnyj kiosk** (guh-*zyet*-nihy kee-*ohsk*; newsstand)
- **golovnyye ubory** (guh-lahv-*nih*-ee oo-*boh*-rih; hats)
- **kantsyelyarskiye tovary** (kuhn-tsih-*lyar*-skee-ee tah-*vah*-rih; stationery products)
- **khozyajstvyennyj magazin** (khah-*zyay*-stvee-nihy muh-guh-*zeen*; household goods, hardware store)
- **komissionnyj magazin** (kuh-mee-see-o*hn*-nihy muh-guh-*zeen*; second-hand store)
- **kosmyetika** (kahs-*mye*-tee-kuh; makeup)
- **muzhskaya odyezhda** (moosh-*skah*-ye ah-*dyezh*-duh; men's apparel)

- **muzykal'nyye instrumyenty** (moo-zih-*kahl'*-nih-ee een-stroo-*myen*-tih; music store)
- **odyezhda** (ah-*dyezh*-duh; clothing store)
- **parfumyeriya** (puhr-fyu-*mye*-ree-ye; perfume)
- **posuda** (pah-*soo*-duh; tableware)
- **sportivnyye tovary** (spahr-*teev*-nih-ee tah-*vah*-rih; sports store)
- **suvyeniry** (soo-vee-*nee*-rih; souvenirs)
- **tkani** (*tkah*-nee; fabric)
- **tsvyety** (tsvee-*tih*; flowers)
- **vyerkhnyaya odyezhda** (*vyerkh*-nye-ye ah-*dyezh*-duh; outerwear store)
- **yuvyelirnyye tovary** (yu-vee-*leer*-nih-ee tah-*vah*-rih; jewelry store)
- **zhyenskaya odyezhda** (*zhehn*-skuh-ye ah-*dyezh*-duh; women's apparel)

Calling for store hours



The easiest way to find out whether a Russian store is open is to go there and look for a sign hanging in the door or window with one of these two words on it: **Otkryto** (aht-*krih*-tuh; Open) or **Zakryto** (zuh-*krit*-tuh; Closed). The next best way is just to call. If nobody answers, it probably means they're closed. Problem solved! But in case someone does answer, you may want to ask **Magazin otkryt?** (muh-guh-*zeen* aht-*kriht*; Is the store open?) or **Do kakogo chasa otkryt magazin?** (duh kuh-*koh*-vuh *chah*-suh aht-*kriht* muh-guh-*zeen*; 'Til what time is the store open?)

If you want to inquire whether the store is open on a particular day, you say, for example, **V voskryesyen'ye magazin otrkryt?** (v vuhs-kree-*syen'*-ee muh-guh-*zeen* aht-*kriht*; Is the store open on Sunday?) For more on talking about days of the week, see Chapter 7.



In Russian, the simplest way to say that a store (or window, door, or anything) is open or closed is by using a form of the word **otkryt** (aht-*kriht*; open) or **zakryt** (zuh-*kriht*; closed). If the noun you're referring to is masculine, just use this form. If it's feminine, add **-a** to each of these words, as in **Dvyer' otkryta.** (dvyer' aht-*krih*-tuh; The door is open.) If the noun is neuter, you add **-o,** as in **Okno zakryto.** (ahk-*noh* zuh-*krih*-tuh; The window is closed.) And if the noun is plural, you add **-y,** as in **Vsye magaziny otkryty syegodnya.** (fsye muh-guh-*zee*-nih aht-*krih*-tih see-*vohd*-nye; The stores are all open today.) (See Chapter 2 for more about the gender of nouns.)

Some other ways to ask about store hours include the following:

- **Kogda magazin zakryvayetsya?** (kahg-*dah* muh-guh-*zeen* zuh-krih-*vah*-eet-sye; When does the store close?)
- **Kogda zavtra otkryvayetsya magazin?** (kahg-*dah zahf*-truh uht-krih-*vah*-eet-sye muh-guh-*zeen*; When does the store open tomorrow?)



Otrkyvatsya (uht-krih-*vaht'*-sye; to open) and **zakryvatsya** (zuh-krih-*vaht'*-sye; to close) are called *reflexive verbs.* They don't take direct objects, because their action refers back to the subject of the sentence. So in the question **Kogda magazin zakryvayetsya?** (kahg-*dah* muh-guh-*zeen* zuh-krih-*vah*-eet-sye; When does the store close?), you're literally asking "What time does the store close itself?" That's because your emphasis is on the fact of the store's closing, and not on who's doing it. The infinitive of reflexive verbs usually end in **-sya,** and you need to add **-sya** to all the usual conjugation endings except after the **ya** (ya; I) and **vy** (vih; you; formal and plural) forms, in which case you add **-s'.**

The verb **zakryvayetsya** was formed by adding the reflexive ending **-sya** to the third person singular form, **zakryvayet** (zuh-krih-*vah*-eet; he/she/it closes), of the imperfective verb **zakryvat'** (zuh-krih-*vaht*; to close). (To refresh your memory about verb infinitives and conjugations, see Chapter 2.)

To indicate working hours in a store, Russians often use a form of the verb **rabotat'** (ruh-*boh*-tuht'; to work). When inquiring about store hours, you're likely to hear something like **Da, magazin rabotayet syegodnya do syemi.** (dah muh-guh-*zeen* ruh-*boh*-tuh-eet see-*vohd*-nye duh see-*mee*; Yes, the store is open today until 7, *Literally:* The store works today until 7.) or **Magazin nye rabotayet v voskryesyen'ye.** (muh-guh-*zeen* nee ruh-*boh*-tuh-eet v vuhs-kree-*syen'*-ee; The store isn't open on Sunday, *Literally:* The store doesn't work on Sunday.)



When you call a store or many places of business in Russia, don't expect the person on the line to introduce herself and tell you the name of the place you've called. Instead, what you most likely hear is an abrupt **Allyo!** (uh'-*lyo*; Hello!), **Slushayu!** (*sloo*-shuh-yu; *Literally*: I'm listening!), or simply **Da!** (dah; Yes!) spoken in a low, serious, or even melancholy voice. Also, try to listen very carefully to the information provided, because once the person on the other end has answered your questions, chances are she will hang up right away! See Chapter 9 for more details about speaking on the phone.

Navigating a department store

If you're in a big department store searching for that perfect souvenir, you may want to approach the **spravochnya** (*sprah*-vuhch-nuh-ye; information desk), or anybody who looks like he works there, and ask the question **Gdye**

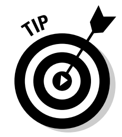
otdyel suvyenirov? (gdye aht-*dyel* soo-vee-*nee*-ruhf; Where is the souvenir department?) or **Gdye suvyeniry?** (gdye soo-vee-*nee*-rih; Where are souvenirs?) You may also want to inquire about what floor the souvenir department is on. Just ask **Na kakom etazhye otdyel suvyernirov?** (nuh kuh-*kohm* eh-tuh-*zheh* aht-*dyel* soo-vee-*nee*-ruhf; What floor is the souvenir department on?) or simply **Na kakom etazhye suvyeniry?** (nuh kuh-*kohm* eh-tuh-*zheh* soo-vee-*nee*-rih; What floor are souvenirs on?)



Note that when you say **otdyel suvyenirov,** you're literally saying "the department of souvenirs" and you put the word for "souvenirs" in the genitive case. (For more info on case endings for nouns, see Chapter 2.)

After you ask for directions, be prepared to hear something like

- **na pyervom etazhye** (nuh *pyer*-vuhm eh-tuh-*zheh*; on the first floor)
- **na vtorom etazhye** (nuh ftah-*rohm* eh-tuh-*zheh*; on the second floor)
- **na tryetyem etazhye** (nuh *tryet'*-eem eh-tuh-*zheh*; on the third floor)
- **na etom etazhye napravo/nalyevo** (nuh *eh*-tuhm eh-tuh-*zheh* nuh-*prah*-vuh/nuh-*lye*-vah; on this floor to the right/left)



If you hear something not listed here, don't panic! Just watch the person's arm movements. Russians often like to accompany their direction-giving with big pointing gestures.



The ordinal numerals **pyervyj** (*pyer*-vihy; first), **vtoroj** (ftah-*rohy*; second), and **tryetij** (*trye'*-teey; third) act just like adjectives, which means they must agree in number, gender, and case with the nouns they modify. (For details on adjective-noun agreement, see Chapter 2.) Russian uses the prepositional case after the preposition **na** when indicating what floor something is on. To form the prepositional case of the ordinal numeral **pyervyj,** you treat the numeral as if it were an adjective and replace the masculine adjectival ending **-yj** with **-om,** as we describe in Chapter 2. And that's how you get the phrase **na pyervom etazhye** (nuh *pyer*-vuhm eh-tuh-*zheh*; on the first floor).

Asking for (or declining) assistance

When you want to ask for help in a Russian store, your first challenge is to get somebody's attention. The best way to do this is to turn to any salesperson and say **Izvinitye pozhalujsta!** (eez-vee-*nee*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh; Excuse me, please!) If you want a slightly softer approach, you can use the phrase **Bud'tye dobry . . .** (*bood'*-tee dahb-*ryh*; Would you be so kind as to help me, *Literally*: Would you be so kind . . .)

After you say one of these two phrases, you'll probably hear **Da, pozhalujsta?** (dah pah-*zhahl*-stuh; Yes, how can I help?) After that you can politely ask a

question, starting off with the polite phrase, **Skazhitye, pozhalujsta . . .** (skuh-*zhih*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh; Would you tell me please . . .) If you're still looking for souvenirs, you can politely say **Skazhitye, pozhalujsta, gdye suvyeniry?** (skuh-*zhih*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh gdye soo-vee-*nee*-rih; Could you please tell me where souvenirs are?)

Some other additional shopping-related phrases include the following:

- **U vas prodayotsya/prodayutsya . . . ?** (oo vahs pruh-duh-*yot*-sye/pruh-duh-*yut*-sye; Do you sell . . . ?) plus the name of the merchandise you're looking for in the nominative case.
- **U vas yest' . . . ?** (oo vahs yest'; Do you have . . . ?)
- **Gdye mozhno kupit' . . . ?** (gdye *mohzh*-nuh koo-*peet'*; Where can I buy . . . ?) plus the thing(s) you want to buy in the accusative case.
- **Pokazhitye, pozhalujsta etot/eto/etu/eti . . .** (puh-kuh-*zhih*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh *eh*-tuht/*eh*-tuh/*eh*-too/*eh*-tee; Please show me this/that . . .) plus the item(s) you want to see in the accusative case. (For more on using the demonstrative pronoun **etot,** see "Using demonstrative pronouns" later in this chapter.)



In making your requests or asking questions, try to avoid phrases such as "I am looking for . . ." or "I would like to see . . ." When translated into Russian, these phrases include the first-person pronoun **ya** (I). Using them isn't culturally appropriate, because Russian tends to avoid this word in requests and in most cases requires that you make your requests impersonal.

You won't hear "May I help you?"

You seldom hear the salespeople in a Russian store say **Ya mogu vam pomoch'?** (yah mah-*goo* vahm pah-*mohch'*; May I help you?) For more than 70 years during the Soviet regime, the salesperson rather than the customer was the boss in the stores. As a matter of fact, one of the authors of this book who grew up in Russia heard the question **Ya mogu vam pomoch'?** only once in her lifetime, namely during a recent visit to a major Moscow department store in post-Soviet Russia. She attributes this occurrence to the fact that after years of living in the U.S., she looked more American than Russian, and that made the store assistant approach her with the typical American question "May I help you?", translated of course into Russian. In most cases you don't have to bother about how you should respond to this question, but just in case you're asked, you can say **Spasibo, ya prosto smotryu.** (spuh-*see*-buh ya *prohs*-tuh smaht-*ryu*; Thanks, I'm just looking.) The good news is that nobody will ever mind your browsing if you don't even plan on buying anything. However, you should know that you'll probably be closely watched either by a **prodavyets** (pruh-duh-*vyets*; salesman), a **prodavsh'itsa** (pruh-duhv-*sh'ee*-tsuh; saleswoman), or an **okhrannik** (ah-*khrah*-neek; security guard), which almost every Russian store has today. But their main concern is not the quality of service but theft prevention!

Talkin' the Talk



Boris needs to buy new gloves and goes to a big department store. He has a short conversation with the **rabotnik univyermaga** (ruh-*boht*-neek oo-nee-veer *mah*-guh; the employee at the information desk).

Boris:	**Skazhitye, pozhalujsta, gdye mozhno kupit' pyerchatki'?** skuh-*zhih*-tee, pah-*zhahl*-stuh, gdye *mohzh*-nuh koo-*peet'* peer-*chaht*-kee? Tell me, please, where can I buy gloves?
Rabotnik univermaga:	**V galantyerejnom otdyelye.** v guh-luhn-tee-*reyy*-nuhm aht-*dye*-lee. In the haberdashery department.
Boris:	**A gdye galantyerejnyj otdyel? Na kakom etazhye?** uh gdye guh-luhn-tee-*ryey*-nihy aht-*dyel*? nuh kuh-*kohm* eh-tuh-*zheh*? And where is the haberdashery department? On what floor?
Rabotnik univermaga:	**Galantyereya na vtorom etazhe.** guh-luhn-tee-*rye*-ye nuh ftah-*rohm* eh-tuh-*zheh*. The haberdashery is on the second floor.
Boris:	**Ponyatno. Spasibo. A gdye lyestnitsa ili lift?** pah-*nyat*-nuh. spuh-*see*-buh. uh gdye *lyes*-nee-tsuh *ee*-lee leeft? I see. Thank you. And where are stairs or elevator?
Rabotnik univermaga:	**Lyestnitsa napravo, a lift nalyevo.** *lyes*-nee-tsuh nuh-*prah*-vuh, uh leeft nuh-*lye*-vuh. The stairs are to the right and the elevator is to the left.

Words to Know

A gdye?	uh gdye	And where is . . . ?
Na kakom etahzhye?	nuh kuh-kohm eh-tuh-zheh	On what floor?
Ponyatno	pah-nyat-nuh	I see
lestnitsa	lyes-nee-tsuh	stairs
lift	leeft	elevator

You Wear It Well: Shopping for Clothes



Russian folk wisdom has it that people's first impression of you is based on the way you're dressed. That's why you're likely to see Russians well-dressed in public, even in informal situations. Clothes-shopping is a big deal to Russians and is often a full-day's affair. In the following sections, we tell you how to get the most out of your clothes-shopping by describing what you're looking for, and getting and trying on the right size.

Seeking specific items of clothing

If you're looking for outerwear (which happens to tourists who forget to plan for the weather in a foreign place!), you want to go to the store or department called **Vyerkhnyaya odyezhda** (*vyerkh*-nee-ye ah-*dyezh*-duh; outerwear). There you'll find things like a

- **kurtka** (*koort*-kuh; short coat or a warmer jacket)
- **pal'to** (puhl'-*toh*; coat)
- **plash'** (plahsh'; raincoat or trench coat)

If you need a new pair of shoes, drop in to the store or department called **Obuv'** (*oh*-boof'; footwear) and choose among

- **bosonozhki** (buh-sah-*nohsh*-kee; women's sandals)
- **botinki** (bah-*teen*-kee; laced shoes)

- **krossovki** (krah-*sohf*-kee; sneakers)
- **sandalii** (suhn-*dah*-lee-ee; sandals)
- **sapogi** (suh-pah-*gee*; boots)
- **tufli** (*toof*-lee; lighter shoes for men and most shoes for women)

In the **Galantyeryeya** (guh-luhn-tee-*rye*-ye; haberdashery) you can buy all kinds of little things, both for her and for him, such as

- **chulki** (chool-*kee*; stockings)
- **chyemodan** (chee-mah-*dahn*; suitcase)
- **galstuk** (*gahl*-stook; necktie)
- **khalat** (khuh-*laht*; robe)
- **kolgotki** (kahl-*goht*-kee; pantyhose)
- **kupal'nik** (koo-*pahl'*-neek; bathing suit)
- **noski** (nahs-*kee*; socks)
- **nosovoj platok** (nuh-sah-*vohy* pluh-*tohk*; handkerchief)
- **ochki** (ahch-*kee*; eyeglasses)
- **pizhama** (pee-*zhah*-muh; pajamas)
- **pyerchatki** (peer-*chaht*-kee; gloves)
- **raschyoska** (ruh-*sh'yos*-kuh; hair brush/comb)
- **ryemyen'** (ree-*myen'*; belt)
- **sumka** (*soom*-kuh; purse or bag)
- **varyezhki** (*vah*-reesh-kee; mittens)
- **zontik** (*zohn*-teek; umbrella)

In the store called **Muzhkaya odyezhda** (moosh-*skah*-ye ah-*dyezh*-duh; men's apparel), you can find the following:

- **bryuki** (*bryu*-kee; pants)
- **dzhinsy** (*dzhihn*-sih; jeans)
- **futbolka** (foot-*bohl*-kuh; football jersey/sports shirt)
- **kostyum** (kahs-*tyum*; suit)
- **maika** (*mahy*-kuh; T-shirt)
- **pidzhak** (peed-*zhahk*; suit jacket)
- **plavki** (*plahf*-kee; swimming trunks)

- **rubashka** (roo-*bahsh*-kuh; shirt)
- **shorty** (*shohr*-tih; shorts)
- **svityer** (*svee*-tehr; sweater)
- **trusy** (troo-*sih*; men's underwear)
- **zhilyet** (zhih-*lyet*; vest)

In the store **Zhyensaya odyezhda** (*zhehn*-skuh-ye ah-*dyezh*-duh; women's apparel), you can find a

- **bluzka** (*bloos*-kuh; blouse)
- **kofta** (*kohf*-tuh; cardigan)
- **lifchik** (*leef*-cheek; bra)
- **plat'ye** (*plaht'*-ee; dress)
- **sarafan** (suh-ruh-*fahn*; sleeveless dress)
- **yubka** (*yup*-kuh; skirt)
- **zhenskoye byel'yo** (*zhehn*-skuh-ee beel'-*yo*; women's underwear)

And if you need a hat, drop by the store or department called **Golovnyye ubory** (guh-lahv-*nih*-ye oo-*boh*-rih; hats) and buy a

- **kyepka** (*kyep*-kuh; cap)
- **platok** (pluh-*tohk*; head scarf)
- **shapka** (*shahp*-kuh; warm winter hat)
- **sharf** (shahrf; scarf)
- **shlyapa** (*shlya*-puh; hat)

Describing items in color



What's your favorite color? When picking out clothes, you may want to tell the salesperson **Ya lyublyu krasnyj tsvyet** (ya lyub-*lyu krahs*-nihy tsvyet; I like red, *Literally*: I like the color red) or **Ya lyublyu zyelyonyj tsvyet** (ya lyub-*lyu* zee-*lyo*-nihy tsvyet; I like green, *Literally*: I like the color green). Some common colors are

- **byelyj** (*bye*-lihy; white)
- **chyornyj** (*chyor*-nihy; black)
- **goluboj** (guh-loo-*bohy*; light blue)
- **korichnyevyj** (kah-*reech*-nee-vihy; brown)
- **krasnyj** (*krahs*-nihy; red)

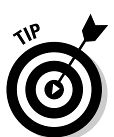
- **oranzhyevyj** (ah-*rahn*-zhih-vihy; orange)
- **purpurnyj** (poor-*poor*-nihy; purple)
- **rozovyj** (*roh*-zuh-vihy; pink)
- **siniy** (*see*-neey; blue)
- **syeryj** (*sye*-rihy; gray)
- **zhyoltyj** (*zhohl*-tihy; yellow)
- **zyelyonyj** (zee-*lyo*-nihy; green)



The names for colors in Russian are considered adjectives. So when you're describing the color of an item you want, make sure the color agrees in case, number, and gender with the noun it modifies. (For more on adjective-noun agreement, see Chapter 2.) For example, a black hat in the nominative case is **chyornaya shlyapa** (*chohr*-nuh-ye *shlya*-puh), a black dress is **chyornoye plat'ye** (*chohr*-nuh-ee *plaht'*-ee), and black shoes are **chyornyye botinki** (*chohr*-nih-ee bah-*teen*-kee).

If you want to ask for a different shade of a color, use the phrase **A potyemnyeye/posvyetlyye yest'?** (uh puh-teem-*nye*-ee/puhs-veet-*lye*-ee yest'? Do you have it in a darker/lighter shade?) Other words that may come in handy are **odnotsvyetnyj** (uhd-nah-*tsvyet*-nihy; solid), and **raznotsvyetnyj** (ruhz-nah-*tsvyet*-nihy; patterned).

Finding the right size



Shoe and clothing sizes differ from country to country, but you don't have to memorize them all when you're traveling. You can usually find conversion charts in any travel book or even in your own pocket calendar. And a great resource for shoe sizes is `www.i18nguy.com/l10n/shoes.html#adult`.

Sizes from different systems are often displayed on the items themselves. If you ever need to convert from inches into centimeters for any clothing item (Russian sizes are given in centimeters), multiply the size in inches by 2.53 and you get the equivalent size in centimeters. But the best way to be certain something fits is just to try the item on!

Following are some of the words and phrases you may hear or say while searching for your right size:

- **Razmyer** (ruhz-*myer*; size)
- **Ya noshu razmyer . . .** (ya nah-*shoo* ruhz-*myer*; I wear size . . .)
- **Eto moj razmyer.** (*eh*-tuh mohy ruhz-*myer*; This is my size.)
- **Kakoj vash/u vas razmyer?** (kuh-*kohy* vahsh/oo vahs ruhz-*myer*; What's your size?)

Trying on clothing

Before you decide you want to **nosit'** (nah-*seet*; to wear) something, you probably want to try it on first. To ask to try something on, you say **Mozhno pomyerit'?** (*mohzh*-nuh pah-*mye*-reet'; May I try this on?) You most likely hear **Da, pozhalujsta.** (dah, pah-*zhahl*-stuh; Yes, please.) Or if the salesperson isn't around, just head to the fitting room yourself, which is acceptable in Russia.

When you try something on, and it fits you well, you say **Eto khorosho sidit.** (*eh*-tuh khuh-rah-*shoh* see-*deet*; It fits.) If it doesn't fit, you say **Eto plohkho sidit** (*eh*-tuh *ploh*-khuh see-*deet*; It doesn't fit). Here are some other adjectives you may use to describe the clothes you're considering buying:

- **khoroshyj** (khah-*roh-shihy*; good)
- **plokhoj** (plah-*khohy*; bad)
- **bol'shoj** (bahl'-*shohy*; big)
- **malyenkij** (*mah*-leen'-keey; small)
- **dlinnyj** (*dlee*-nihy; long)
- **korotkij** (kah-*roht*-keey; short)



Don't forget when using these adjectives to add the correct ending, which depends on the case, number, and gender of the noun the adjective refers to. (For more on adjective-noun agreement, see Chapter 2.)

The item you've just tried on may turn out to be too big or too small. To say something is too big, use this construction: The name of the item + **mnye** (mnye; to me) followed by

- **vyelik** (vee-*leek*; too big) for masculine nouns
- **vyelika** (vee-lee-*kah*; too big) for feminine nouns
- **vyeliko** (vee-lee-*koh*; too big) for neuter nouns
- **vyeliki** (vee-lee-*kee*; too big) for plural nouns

If the raincoat you just tried on is too big, for example, you say **Etot plash' mnye vyelik.** (*eh*-tuht plahsh' mnye vee-*leek*; This raincoat is too big for me.) See Chapter 2 for more info on how to determine the gender of a noun.

If, on the other hand, something is too small, you say the name of the item + **mnye** + one of the following:

- **mal** (mahl; too small) for masculine nouns
- **mala** (muh-*lah*; too small) for feminine nouns
- **malo** (muh-*loh*; too small) for neuter nouns
- **maly** (muh-*lih*; too small) for plural nouns

This or That? Deciding What You Want

One of the most exciting things about shopping for clothes (or anything, for that matter) is talking about the advantages and disadvantages of your potential purchase. In this section we give you all the words, phrases, and grammatical constructions you need to do just that. We tell you how to express likes and dislikes, how to compare items, and how to specify which item you like best of all.

Using demonstrative pronouns

When deciding which dress you want to buy, you may want to make a statement like **Eto plat'ye luchshye chyem to.** (*eh*-tuh *plaht'*-ee *looch*-sheh chehm toh; This dress is better than that one.) The words **eto** (*eh*-tuh; this) and **to** (toh; that one) are called *demonstrative pronouns.* In Russian, demonstrative pronouns function like adjectives and change their endings depending on the case, number, and gender of the nouns they modify. (See Chapter 2 for more on adjective-noun agreement.) When comparing items, you're almost always using demonstrative pronouns only in the nominative case, so here are all the forms you need to know:

- **etot** (*eh*-tuht; this or this one) for masculine nouns
- **eta** (*eh*-tuh; this or this one) for feminine nouns
- **eto** (*eh*-tuh; this or this one) for neuter nouns
- **eti** (*eh*-tee; these or these ones) for plural nouns
- **tot** (toht; that or that one) for masculine nouns
- **ta** (tah; that or that one) for feminine nouns
- **to** (toh; that or that one) for neuter nouns
- **tye** (tye; those or those ones) for plural nouns

Expressing likes and dislikes



When people go shopping, they often base their final decisions on one simple thing: You either like something or you don't! To express that you like something in Russian, you say **Mnye** (mnye; *Literally:* to me) + a form of the verb **nravitsya** (*nrah*-veet-sye; to like) + the thing(s) you like. The verb must agree in number (and gender, for past tense) with the thing(s) you like. It's a peculiar construction: What you're saying literally is "To me, something is liked." If you like a particular coat, for example, you say **Mnye nravitsya eta kurtka.** (mnye *nrah*-veet-sye *eh*-tuh *koort*-kuh; I like this coat.)

Table 6-1 has some other forms of the verb **nravitsya** you may need to use, depending on the thing(s) you're talking about and the tense you're using.

Table 6-1 Tenses of Nravit'sya

Present Tense	nravit'sya (singular), nravyatsya (plural)
Past Tense	nravilsya (masculine), narvilas' (feminine), nravilos' (neuter) naravilis' (plural)
Future Tense	budyet nravit'sya (singular) and budut nravit'sya (plural)

If you want to express that you *don't* like something, you simply add **nye** (nee; not) before **nravitsya,** as in **Mnye nye nravitsya eta kurtka.** (mnye nee *nrah*-veet-sye *eh*-tuh *koort*-kuh; I don't like this coat.)

Practice using this construction. Imagine you're in a store with your best friend whom you dragged with you to help you find a nice formal **kostyum** (kahs-t*yum*; suit) that you need for work. You like the brown suit, but your friend seems to like the blue one. These are the remarks that the two of you may exchange:

- **Mnye nravitsya korichnyevyj kostyum.** (mnye *nrah*-veet-sye kah-*reech*-nee-vihy kahs-*tyum*; I like the brown suit.)
- **Mnye nravitsya sinij kostyum.** (mnye *nrah*-veet-sye *see*-neey kahs-*tyum*; I like the blue suit.)

Contrary to your friend's advice, you buy the suit you like: the brown one. Your friend still holds to his opinion and when leaving the store he says with a deep sigh of regret: **Mnye nravilsya sinij kostyum.** (mnye *nrah*-veel-sye *see*-neey kahs-*tyum*; I liked the blue suit).

Comparing two items



To compare things, Russian uses comparative adjectives like **bol'shye** (*bohl'*-sheh; bigger), **myen'shye** (*myen'*-sheh; smaller), **luchshye** (*looch*-sheh; better) and **khuzhye** (*khoo*-zheh; worse). Just as in English, you say the name of the item + the comparative adjectives (for instance, bigger or smaller) + the word **chyem** (chyem; than) + the other item. And here's some good news: Comparative adjectives do *not* need to agree in case, number, and gender with the nouns they refer to. They use the same form for every noun!

Say you're trying on two pairs of shoes. You like the second pair better: it's more comfortable, lighter, and cheaper, too. This is what you may be thinking to yourself: **Eti tufli udobnyeye, lyegchye, i dyeshyevlye chyem tye.** (*eh*-tee *toof*-lee oo-*dohb*-nee-ee *lyekh*-chee ee dee-*shehv*-lee chyem tye; These shoes are more comfortable, lighter, and cheaper than those.)

In addition to the words we use here, some other commonly used comparative adjectives in Russian are

- **dlinnyeye** (dlee-*nye*-ee; longer)
- **dorozhye** (dah-*roh*-zheh; more expensive)
- **dyeshyevlye** (dee-*shehv*-lee; cheaper)
- **intyeryesnyeye** (een-tee-*ryes*-nee-ee; more interesting)
- **kholodnyeye** (khuh-lahd-*nye*-ee; colder)
- **korochye** (kah-*rohch*-chee; shorter)
- **krasivyeye** (kruh-*see*-vee-ee; more beautiful)
- **tolsh'ye** (*tohl*-sh'e; thicker)
- **ton'shye** (*tohn'*-sheh; thinner)
- **tyazhyelyeye** (tee-zhih-*lye*-ee; heavier)
- **tyeplyeye** (teep-*lye*-ee; warmer)

Talking about what you like most (or least)

When you look at several items (or people or things), you may like one of them most of all. To communicate this preference, you need to use the superlative form of the adjective. Just like in English, Russian simply adds the word **samyj** (*sah*-mihy; the most) before the adjective and noun you're talking about.



To express the superlative form of the adjective, put **samyj** before the neutral adjective form, not the comparative adjective form, as given in the previous section. For a list of superlative adjective forms, see Table 6-2.



Samyj is an adjective and must agree in case, number, and gender with the nouns and other adjectives it modifies. (For details on adjective-noun agreement, see Chapter 2). Table 6-2 has the forms of **samyj** you need to use.

Table 6-2 Speaking in Superlatives

	Masculine	*Feminine*	*Neuter*
Singular	samyj (*sah*-mihy)	samaya (*sah*-muh-ye)	samoye (*sah*-muh-ye)
Plural (all genders)	samyye (*sah*-mih-ee)	samyye (*sah*-mih-ee)	samyye (*sah*-mih-ee)

If one coat is lightest of all the coats you tried on, you may want to say **Eta kurtka samaya lyogkaya.** (*eh*-tuh *koort*-kuh *sah*-muh-ye *lyohk*-kuh-ye; This coat is the lightest.) If you're particularly fond of one pair of earrings, you can say **Eti syer'gi samyye krasivyye.** (*eh*-tee *syer'*-gee *sah*-mih-ee krah-*see*-vih-ee; These earrings are the most beautiful ones.)

To communicate that something is the worst in its category, Russians today use the word **samyj plokhoj** (*sah*-mihy plah-*khohy*; worst, *Literally:* most bad) for masculine nouns, **samaya plokhaya** (*sah*-muh-ye plah-*khah*-ye) for feminine nouns, **samoye plokhoye** (*sah*-muh-ee plah-*khoh*-ee) for neuter nouns, and **samyye plokhiye** (*sah*-mih-ee plah-*khee*-ee) for plural nouns.

So if you particularly dislike one dress, you say **Eto plat'ye samoye plokhoye.** (eh-tuh *plaht'*-ee *sah*-muh-ee plah-*khoh*-ee; That dress is the worst, *Literally:* That dress is the most bad.)

You Gotta Pay to Play: Buying Items

After you decide on an item of clothing or any other piece of merchandise, you want to make sure the price is right. In the following sections, we show you how to ask how much something costs, how to indicate you'll take it, and how to find out how you should pay for it.

How much does it cost?



To ask how much something costs, you use the phrase **Skol'ko stoit . . . ?** (*skohl'*-kuh *stoh*-eet; How much does . . . cost?) + the name of the item in the nominative case, if you're buying one thing. If you're buying more than one thing, you ask **Skol'ko stoyat . . . ?** (*skohl'*-kuh *stoh*-yet; How much do . . . cost?) + the name of the items in the nominative plural. (For more on cases and forming the nominative plural of nouns, see Chapter 2.)

If you want to know the price of an umbrella, you ask **Skol'ko stoit etot zontik?** (*skohl'*-kuh *stoh*-eet *eh*-tuht *zohn*-teek; How much is this umbrella?) If you want to buy several umbrellas, you ask **Skol'ko stoyat eti zontiki?** (*skohl'*-kuh *stoh*-yet *eh*-tee *zohn*-tee-kee; How much are these umbrellas?)

The item you're considering buying may be too expensive for you, in which case you say **Eto ochyen' dorogo.** (*eh*-tuh *oh*-cheen' *doh*-ruh-guh; It's very expensive.) If, on the other hand, you're pleasantly surprised with the price, you may joyfully say **Eto dyoshyevo!** (*eh*-tuh *dyo*-shih-vuh; It's cheap!)

I'll take it!



The simplest way to express your intention to buy something is to say **Ya voz'mu eto.** (ya vahz'-*moo eh*-tuh; I'll take it.) You can also use a form of the verb **kupit'** (koo-*peet'*; to buy) and say **Ya eto kuplyu** (ya *eh*-tuh koo-*plyu*; I'll buy it.)



Kupit' is the perfective aspect of the verb and can only be used to express past or future action. (For more on aspects, see Chapter 2.) It also has an irregular conjugation pattern. See Table 6-3.

Table 6-3 Conjugation of Kupit'

Russian	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya kuplyu	ya koo-*plyu*	I'll buy
ty kupish'	tih *koo*-peesh	You'll buy (informal singular)
on/ona/ono kupit	ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh* *koo*-peet	He/she/it will buy
my kupim	mih *koo*-peem	We'll buy
vy kupitye	vih *koo*-pee-tee	You'll buy (formal singular and plural)
oni kupyat	ah-*nee koo*-pyet	They'll buy

Say you're planning on buying the umbrella you like. You have two ways to state this fact in Russian using a form of **kupit'**: **Ya khochu kupit' zontik.** (ya khah-*choo* koo-*peet' zohn*-teek; I want to buy an umbrella.) or **Ya kuplyu zontik.** (ya koop-*lyu zohn*-teek; I will buy an umbrella.)

Where and how do I pay?



More often than not a Russian store has a **kassa** (*kah*-suh; cahier's desk) with a **kassir** (kuh-*seer*; cashier). To pay for your item, you first need to take your money to the **kassir** and get a receipt, which you then take back to the salesperson you've already dealt with. It's a bit of a pain, and that's why it's always a good idea to ask first where you're supposed to pay: **A gdye mozhno zaplatit'?** (ah gdye *mohzh*-nuh zuh-pluh-*teet'*; And where can I pay?)

When you ask **A gdye mozhno zaplatit'?**, the response may be **V kassye.** (*f kah*-see; At the cahier's desk.) or **Platitye v kassu.** (pluh-*tee*-tee *f kah*-soo; Pay at the cashier's desk.) If you hear one of these phrases, head for the cashier's desk if it's in view. If it's not, you can ask **A gdye kassa?** (ah gdye *kah*-suh; And where is the cashier's desk?) Hopefully they'll show you where it is, and your shopping adventure will almost be over!

If you're unsure whether the store accepts credit cards, you can ask **Vy prinimayetye kryeditnyye kartochki?** (vih pree-nee-*mah*-ee-tee kree-*deet*-nih-ee *kahr*-tuhch-kee; Do you accept credit cards?) The answer may be **Da, prinimayem.** (dah, pree-nee-*mah*-eem; Yes, we do.) or **Nyet, nye prinimayem, tol'ko nalichnyye.** (nyet nee pree-nee-*mah*-eem *tohl'*-kuh nah-*leech*-nih-ee; No, we don't, only cash.) See Chapter 14 for more about handling money.



Normally it's almost impossible to receive a refund in a Russian store. Our advice: Think twice before you buy anything in Russia. If you're really lucky, you may try to get a refund by saying **Ya khochu eto vyernut'.** (ya khah-*choo eh*-tuh veer-*noot'*; I want to return this.) The most common response will probably be **My nye prinimayem obratno.** (mih nee pree-nee-*mah*-eem ahb-*raht*-nuh; We don't take it back.) or **My nye mozhyem vyernut' vam dyen'gi.** (mih nee *moh*-zheem veer-*noot'* vahm *dehn'*-gee; We can't do a refund, *Literally:* We can't give you back your money.) Once in a blue moon a sympathetic salesperson may agree to exchange what you bought. In this case you'll hear **Yesli khotitye, my mozhyem obmyenyat'.** (*yes*-lee khah-*tee*-tee mih *moh*-zheem ahb-mee-*nyat'*; If you want, we can exchange it.) If you hear this phrase, consider yourself one of the lucky few, and go for it!

Talkin' the Talk



Zina and Nina are best friends. They call each other every day. Today Zina bought a new dress and calls Nina to share this exciting news.

Nina: **Allyo!**
uh-*lyo!*
Hello!

Zina: **Nina, eto ya.**
nee-nuh, *eh*-tuh ya.
Nina, it's me.

Nina: **Zina! Privet! Kak dela?**
zee-nuh! pree-*vyet*! kahk dee-*lah*?
Zina! Hi! How are you?

Zina: **Nina, ya segodnya kupila syebye plat'ye!**
nee-nuh, ya see-*vohd*-nye koo-*pee*-luh see-*bye plaht'*-ee!
Nina, I bought myself a dress today!

Nina: **Gdye?**
gdye?
Where?

Zina: **V magazinye na Sadovoj ulitsye.**
v muh-guh-*zee*-nee nuh suh-*doh*-vuhy *oo*-lee-tseh.
At the store on Sadovaya street.

Nina: **A za skolyko ty kupila plat'ye?**
uh zah *skohl'*-kuh tih koo-*pee*-luh *plaht'*-ee?
And how much did you buy the dress for?

Zina: **Dyoshyevo. Za sto pyat'dyesyat.**
dyo-sheh-vuh. zah stoh pee-dee-*syat.*
Cheap. For one hundred fifty rubles.

Words to Know

Ya kupila syebye . . .	ya koo-pee-luh see-bye	I bought myself . . .
Na . . . ulitsye	nah oo-lee-tseh	On . . . street
Za skol'ko ty kupila plat'ye?	zah skohl'-kuh tih ee-voh koo-pee-luh	How much did you buy the dress for?
Za sto pyat'dyesyat.	zah stoh pee-dee-syat	For one hundred fifty rubles.

Something Special: Cool Things to Buy in Russia

The best souvenir to bring home from Russia is a **palyekhskaya shkatulka** (*pah*-leekh-skuh-ye shkah-*tool*-kuh; Palekh box): a black lacquered box made from papier-mâché and decorated with paintings based on traditional Russian fairy-tale plots. The authentic boxes are manufactured only in two little Russian cities, Palekh and Khokhloma, and they're quite expensive.



Watch out for knock-offs. Don't buy a **palyekhskaya shkatulka** from street vendors, who often ask the same high price for their fake versions. Ask your guide or a hotel employee where the best place to buy these boxes is.

Another cool **suvyenir** (soo-vee-*neer*; souvenir) to bring home is the famous Russian **matryoshka** (muh-*tryosh*-kuh) doll. It's a wooden doll that, when opened at its rather wide waistline, contains at least three of its "children" hiding inside of each other, each one smaller than the next. **Matryoshki** (muh-*tryosh*-kee) come in different sizes, and the bigger the "mother," the more daughters you'll discover inside.

You may also want to bring home with you a famous Russian **myekhovaya shapka** (mee-khah-*vah*-ye *shahp*-kuh; fur hat) that Russians wear in the winter. You can buy them in either **chyornyj** (*chyohr*-nihy; black) or **korich-nyevyj** (kah-*reech*-nee-vihy; brown), and the best place to buy them is in an

univyermag (oo-nee-veer-*mahk*; department store) in the **otdyel** (aht-*dyel*; department) called **golovnyye ubory** (guh-lahv-*nih*-ee oo-*boh*-rih; hats), or in any standalone store with that same name.

If you're into collecting cool memorabilia from the past, you'll definitely want to buy some **sovyetskiye voyennyye chasy** (sah-v*yet*-skee-ee vah-*yen*-nih-ee chuh-*sih*; Soviet military watches). These watches, which are now considered collectors items, usually come with many different stylish designs. They're sturdy and reliable, because they were manufactured in Soviet times specially for military personnel. You can usually buy them at any store called **suvyeniry** (soo-vee-*nee*-rih; souvenirs).



At which of these stores are you likely to find the following items? See Appendix C for the correct answers.

a. **obuv′** b. **kosmyetika** c. **fototovary** d. **muzhskaya odyezhda** e. **khozyajstvyennyj magazin** f. **kantsyelyarskiye tovary** g. **golovnyye ubory**

1. facial cream

2. suit

3. boots

4. camera

5. hat

6. soap

7. stationery

Compare the following (the correct answers are in Appendix C), using the words:

a. **bol′shye** b. **myen′shye** c. **dorozhye** d. **kholodnyeye** e. **tyazhyelyeye**

For example:

Q. **Moskva** . . . **chyem Pyetyerburg.** (Moscow is . . . than St. Petersburg.)

A. **Moskva bol′shye chyem Pyetyerburg.**

1. **Pyetyerburg . . . chyem Moskva.** (St. Petersburg is . . . than Moscow.)

2. **Zima v Moskvye . . . chyem v San-Frantsisko.** (Winter in Moscow is . . . than in San Francisco.)

3. **Myersyedyes** . . . **chyem Toyota.** (Mercedes is . . . than Toyota.)

4. **Sapogi** . . . **chyem tufli.** (Boots are . . . than shoes.)

Chapter 7

Going Out on the Town, Russian-Style

In This Chapter

- Talking about the time
- Planning to go out
- Catching a flick
- Getting the most out of the ballet and theater
- Checking out a museum
- Sharing your impressions about an event

This chapter is all about going out on the town the Russian way. We take you to the movies, the theater, the ballet, and a museum. These places are still the most popular for Russians to go on their time off. We show you how to make plans with friends, how and where to buy tickets, how to find your seat, how to make the most of intermission, and what to say when you want to share your impressions of an event with your friends. But to make sure you're not late, we first need to tell you how to ask about and understand show times. So please be patient, or as Russians like to say, **Vsyo khorosho v svoyo vryemya** (fsyo khuh-rah-*shoh* f svah-*yo* *vrye*-mye; Everything in good time).

The Clock's Ticking: Telling Time

When you go out and have fun, **vryemya** (*vrye*-mye; time) is crucial. For one thing, you need to allocate time for fun in your busy schedule, or, as Russians often say, **Dyelu vryemya, potyekhye chas** (*dye*-loo *vrye*-mye pah-*tye*-khee chahs; Pleasure after business). Secondly, if you arrive late for a show or performance in Russia, they simply won't let you in! In the following sections, we help you solve these problems by telling you how to state and ask for time, and how to specify times of the day and days of the week.



The tortoise and the hare: Russian versus American concepts of time

While Americans believe that time is money, Russians have a much different idea about time. No matter what you want to have done, everything seems to take longer in Russia. If you mail a letter to somebody, expect it to arrive at its destination in no less than a week (or even get lost on the way). If you want to pay for your dinner in a restaurant, it may take a long time for a waiter to finally show up. If you call your business partner and leave a message on her answering machine, it may take days for her to return your call. No wonder Russians are known for their patience!

Counting the hours



Just like in Europe, Russia uses the 24-hour system for each day. Instead of 3 p.m., you may hear the phrase **pyatnadtsdat' chasov** (peet-*naht*-tsuht' chuh-*sohf*; fifteen o'clock, *Literally:* fifteen hours). Notice that the word for "o'clock" and "hour" is the same in Russian: **chas** (chahs). Russians use this form of time-telling for all kinds of official messages: timetables, schedules, radio and TV announcements, working hours, and so on. In everyday situations, however, most people use the first twelve numerals (as they do in the U.S.) to indicate both a.m. and p.m. hours.

If you want to indicate "a.m." when using the 12-hour system, you say **utra** (oot-*rah*; *Literally:* in the morning) after the time; you say **dnya** (dnya; *Literally:* in the day) after the time to indicate "p.m." So 5 a.m. would be **pyat' chasov utra** (pyat' chuh-*sohf* oot-*rah*), and 5 p.m. would be **pyat' chasov dnya** (pyat' chuh-*sohf* dnya). When you're using the 24-hour system, you don't have to add the words **utra** or **dnya.**



Saying "o'clock" in Russian is kind of tricky. These simple rules, however, should help you translate this word into Russian:

- If the time is one o'clock, you just use the word **chas,** as in **Syejchas chas** (see-*chahs* chahs; It's 1 o'clock). You don't even have to say **odin** (ah-*deen*; one) before the word **chas.**
- After the numeral **dvadtsat' odin** (*dvaht*-tsuht' ah-*deen*; twenty-one), use the word **chas** (chahs; o'clock), as in **Syejchas dvadtsat' odin chas** (see-*chahs dvaht*-tsuht' ah-*deen* chahs; It's 21 o'clock), or in other words, 9 p.m.
- After the numbers **dva** (dvah; two), **tri** (tree; three), **chyetyrye** (chee-*tih*-ree; four), **dvadtsat' dva** (*dvaht*-tsuht' dvah; twenty-two), **dvadtsat' tri** (*dvaht*-tsuht' tree; twenty-three), and **dvadtsat' chyetyrye** (*dvaht*-tsuht'

chee-*tih*-ree; twenty-four), use the word **chasa** (chuh-*sah,* o'clock), as in **Syejchas tri chasa** (see-*chahs* tree chuh-*sah*; It's 3 o'clock).

- With all other numerals indicating time, use the word **chasov** (chuh-*sohf*; o'clock), as in **Syejchas pyat chasov** (see-*chahs* pyat' chuh-*sohf*; It's 5 o'clock).

For more info about numerals, see Chapter 2.

One final tip: To say "noon" in Russian, you just say **poldyen'** (*pohl*-deen'; *Literally:* half day). When you want to say "midnight," you say **polnoch'** (*pohl*-nuhch; *Literally:* half night).

Marking the minutes

In their fast-paced lives, most people plan their days not just down to the hour but also down to the **minuta** (mee-*noo*-tuh; minute) and even the **syekunda** (see-*koon*-duh; second). In the following sections, we show you different ways to keep time by expressing minute time increments in Russian.

On the half hour

The easiest way to state the time by the half hour in Russian is to just add the words **tridtsat' minut** (*treet*-tsuht' mee-*noot*; thirty minutes) to the hour: **Syejchas dva chasa tridtsat' minut** (see-*chahs* dvah chuh-*sah treet*-tsuht' mee-*noot*; It's 2:30). In more conversational speech, it's common to drop the words **chasa** and **minut** and just say **Syejchas dva tridtsat'** (see-*chahs* dvah *treet*-tsuht'; It's 2:30).

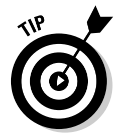
However, you may hear other ways of talking about half hour increments, such as **Syejchas polovina pyervogo/vtorogo/tryet'yego** (see-*chahs* puh-lah-*vee*-nuh *pyer*-vuh-vuh/ftah-*roh*-vuh/*tryet'*-ee-vuh; It's half past twelve/one/two, *Literally:* It's half of one/two/three).



You may be wondering why "half past one" is **polovina vtorogo** rather than **polovina pyervogo.** That's because the word **polovina** literally means "half of," not "half past." What you're really saying is "half of" whatever the next hour is. Therefore, 1:30 in Russian is literally "half of two," or **polovina vtorogo,** and 2:30 is literally "half of three," or **polovina tryet'yego.** Remember to keep this straight, or else you're going to be an hour late for a lot of appointments!



In a phrase like **Syejchas polovina pyervogo,** the Russian word used to indicate the hour (**pyervogo**) is the genitive form of the ordinal number **pyervyj** (*pyer*-vihy; first). For more on cases and ordinal numbers, see Chapter 2.



While using **polovina** is perfectly fine in all situations, you can also replace **polovina** with the slightly more conversational word **pol** (pohl) to indicate half-hour increments, as in **Syejchas pol vtorogo** (see-*chahs* pohl ftah-*roh*-vuh; It's half past one, *Literally:* It's half of two.)

On the quarter hour

To indicate a quarter after an hour, Russian typically uses the phrase **pyatnadtsat' minut** (peet-*naht*-tsuht' mee-*noot*; fifteen minutes). Using **pyatnadtsat' minut** to indicate a quarter after the hour is easy. To say it's 5:15, you just say **Syejchas pyat' chasov pyatnadtsat' minut** (see-*chahs* pyat' chuh-*sohf* peet-*naht*-tsuht' mee-*noot*; *Literally:* It's five hours fifteen minutes). To be more conversational, you can drop **chasov** and **minut** and say **Syejchas pyat' pyatnadtsat'** (see-*chahs* pyat' peet-*naht*-tsuht'; It's 5:15).

To indicate a quarter to an hour is a little trickier. In this situation, Russian uses the word **byez** (byes; without) with **pyatnadtsati** and the hour, as in **Syejchas byez pyatnadtsati pyat'** (see-*chahs* bees peet-*naht*-tsuh-tee pyat'; It's 4:45, *Literally:* It's five without fifteen minutes). The pronounciation of **byez** changed in the sentence because it's followed by a word beginning with the devoiced consonant **p** (see Chapter 2 for details on devoiced consonants).

If you feel brave and want to use the word **chyetvyert'** (*chyet*-veert'; quarter) to talk about 15-minute increments, then you need to do one of the following:

- If it's a quarter past an hour, use the genitive case of the ordinal number corresponding to the next hour. For example: **Syejchas chyetvyert' syed'mogo** (see-*chahs chyet*-veert' seed'-*moh*-vuh; It's a quarter past six, *Literally:* A quarter of the seventh hour has passed).
- If it's a quarter to an hour, use the phrase **byez chyetvyerti** (bees *chyet*-veer-tee), as in **Syejchas byez chyetvyerti vosyem'** (see-*chahs* bees *chyet*-veer-tee *voh*-seem'; It's a quarter to eight, *Literally:* It's eight minus a quarter).

Other times before or after the hour

To state times that aren't on the half or quarter hour, you can simply use the construction **Syejchas** . . . **chasa** (or **chasov**) + . . . **minut**, as in **Syejchas chyetyrye chasa dyesyat' minut** (see-*chahs* chee-*tih*-ree chuh-*sah dye*-seet' mee-*noot*; It's 4:10.) For more conversational speech, you can also drop the words **chasa** (or **chasov**) and **minut** and just say **Syejchas chyetyrye dyesyat'** (see-*chahs* chee-*tih*-ree *dye*-seet').

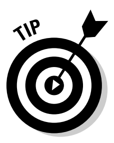
To express times right before the hour, you use the construction **Syejchas byez** plus the numbers indicating the minutes and the next hour. "It's ten to five" is **Syejchas byez dyesyati pyat** (see-*chahs* bees dee-see-*tee* pyat'; *Literally:* It's five minus ten minutes). In this construction, it's common to drop the words **minut** (minutes) and **chasov** (hours) after the numerals indicating the time.



When using this expression, you must always remember to put the numeral after the word **byez** into the genitive case. Here are the genitive case forms of the numerals you most often use with this expression:

- **odnoj** (ahd-*nohy*; one)
- **dvukh** (dvookh; two)
- **tryokh** (tryokh; three)
- **chyetyryokh** (chee-tih-*ryokh*; four)
- **pyati** (pee-*tee*; five)
- **dyesyati** (dee-see-*tee*; ten)
- **pyat'nadtsati** (peet-*naht*-tsuh-tee; fifteen)
- **dvadtsati** (dvaht-tsuh-*tee*; twenty)
- **dvadtsati pyati** (dvuht-tsuh-*tee* pee-*tee*; twenty-five)

Asking for the time



To ask what time it is, you say **Skol'ko syejchas vryemyeni?** (*skohl'*-kuh see-*chahs vrye*-mee-nee; What time is it?) If you ask a passerby in public, you may want to begin this question with the polite phrase **Izvinitye pozhalujsta . . .** (eez-vee-*nee*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh; Excuse me, please . . .) or **Skazhitye pozhalujsta . . .** (skuh-*zhih*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh; Could you please tell me . . .)

To ask at what time something will happen or has happened, use the phrases **Kogda** (kahg-*dah*; when) or **V kakoye vryemya** . . . (f kuh-*koh*-ee *vrye*-mye . . . ; At what time . . .)

Talkin' the Talk



John went downtown today but left his watch at home. He needs to find out what time it is and asks a very pretty **dyevushka** (*dye*-voosh-kuh; young woman) who happens to be passing by if she can tell him the time.

John: **Dyevushka, izvinitye pozhaluysta, vy nye skazhyetye skol'ko syejchas vryemyeni?**
dye-voosh-kuh eez-vee-*nee*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh vih nee *skah*-zhih-tee *skohl'*-kuh see-*chahs vrye*-mee-nee?
Excuse me, miss, can you tell me what time it is?

Dyevushka: **Syejchas? Syejchas byez chyetvyerti chas.**
see-*chahs*? see-*chahs* bees *chyet*-veer-tee chahs
Time? It's quarter to one.

John:	**Skol'ko? Prostitye ya nye ponyal. Ya inostranyets**. *skohl'*-kuh? prah-*stee*-tee ya nee *poh*-neel. ya ee-nah-*strah*-neets What time? Sorry, I did not understand. I am a foreigner.
Dyevushka:	**Syejchas byez pyatnadtsati minut chas. Vot chasy, posmotritye**. see-*chahs* bees peet-*naht*-tsuh-tee mee-*noot* chahs. voht chuh-*sih*, puhs-mah-*tree*-tee. It is fifteen minutes to one. Here is my watch, take a look.
John:	**A, ponyatno. Oj, ya dolzhyen byt' na vstryechye v chas tridtsat' v ryestoranye "Vostok"! Ya opazdyvayu**. ah pah-*nyat*-nuh. ohy ya *dohl*-zhihn biht' nuh *fstrye*-chee f chahs *treet*-tsuht' v rees-tah-*rah*-nee vahs-*tohk*. ya ah-*pahz*-dih-vuh-yu! Oh, I see. Oh, I have to meet somebody at the restaurant "Vostok" at 1:30. I am running late.
Dyevushka:	**Oj, eto ryadom. U vas vstryecha v polovinye vtorogo? Tuda idti pyatnadtsat' minut. Vy tam budyetye v chas.** ohy *eh*-tuh *rya*-duhm. oo vahs *fstrye*-chuh f puh-lah-*vee*-nee ftah-*roh*-vuh? too-*dah* eet-*tee* peet-*naht*-tsuht' mee-*noot*. vih tahm *boo*-dee-tee f chahs. Oh, it's close by. Do you have a meeting at half past one? It's a 15-minute walk. You'll be there at 1.
John:	**Bol'shoye vam spasibo, dyevushka.** bahl'-*shoh*-ee vahm spuh-*see*-buh *dye*-voosh-kuh. Thank you so much, miss.

Words to Know

Vy nye skazhyetye?	vih nee skah-zhih-tee	Can you tell me?
Prostitye ya nye ponyal.	prah-stee-tee ya nee poh-neel	Sorry, I did not understand.
inostranyets	ee-nah-strah-neets	foreigner
Vot chasy.	voht chuh-sih	Here is (my) watch.
Posmotritye.	puh-smah-tree-tee	Take a look.
Ya dolzhyen byt' na vstryechye.	ya dohl-zhihn biht' nuh fstrye-chee	I have to be at a meeting/to meet somebody.
Ya opazdyvayu.	Ya ah-pahz-dih-vuh-yoo	I'm running late.
Tuda idti . . . minut.	too-dah eet-tee . . . mee-noot	It's a . . . minute walk.
Vy tam budyetye v	vih tahm boo-dee-tee v	You'll be there at

Knowing the times of the day



People all over the world seem to agree on three main time periods: **utro** (*oo*-truh; morning), **dyen'** (dyen'; afternoon), and **vyechyer** (*vye*-cheer; evening). **Noch'** (nohch; night) is the time when most people sleep. To state that something happens within these time periods, use these phrases:

- **utrom** (*oo*-truhm; in the morning)
- **dnyom** (dnyom; in the afternoon)
- **vyechyerom** (*vye*-chee-ruhm; in the evening)
- **noch'yu** (*nohch*-yu; late at night or early in the morning)



While English uses the prepositional phrase "in + time of the day" to indicate times of the day, in Russian you put the words **utro, dyen', vyechyer,** and **noch'** in instrumental case. (For more on instrumental case, see Chapter 2.) Also note that the word **dyen'** drops the letter **ye** in the process and becomes

dnyom rather than **denyom.** Nouns sometimes have this habit of "losing" letters in the process of declining for cases in Russian.

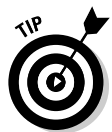
Distinguishing the days of the week



To indicate days of the week, use these Russian words:

- **ponyedyel'nik** (puh-nee-*dyel'*-neek; Monday)
- **vtornik** (*ftohr*-neek; Tuesday)
- **sryeda** (sree-*dah*; Wednesday)
- **chyetvyerg** (cheet-*vyerk*; Thursday)
- **pyatnitsa** (*pyat*-nee-tsuh; Friday)
- **subbota** (soo-*boh*-tuh; Saturday)
- **voskryesyen'ye** (vuhs-kree-*syen'*-ee; Sunday)

If somebody asks you what day of the week it is, he says: **Kakoj syegodnya dyen'?** (kuh-*kohy* see-*vohd*-nye dyen'; What day is it today?) To answer this question, you say **Syegodnya** plus the day of the week. For example: **Syegodnya ponyedyel'nik** (see-*vohd-nye* puh-nee-*dyel'*-neek; It's Monday today). It's that simple!



Note that while in English the words indicating days of the week are written with capital letters, in Russian they aren't.

To say that something happens, happened, or will happen on a certain day, you need to add the preposition **v,** and you put the word denoting the day of the week into the accusative case. (For more on cases, see Chapter 2.)

As a result, the phrases you use are the following:

- **v ponyedyel'nik** (f puh-nee-*dyel'*-neek; on Monday)
- **vo vtornik** (vah *ftohr*-neek; on Tuesday)
- **v sryedu** (f *srye*-doo; on Wednesday)
- **v chyetvyerg** (f cheet-*vyerk*; on Thursday)
- **v pyatnitsu** (*f pyat*-nee-tsuh; on Friday)
- **v subbotu** (f soo-*boh*-too; on Saturday)
- **v voskryesyen'ye** (v vuhs-kree-*syen'*-ee; on Sunday)



You may wonder why some of the days change in the accusative case, while others don't. The explanation is simple: Masculine nouns denoting inanimate objects don't change their form in accusative case and retain their nominative (dictionary) form. You may also wonder why the word **vtornik** is used with the preposition **vo** rather than **v** as other days of the week do. Well, mostly for phonetic reasons: It's very hard (even for Russians!) to pronounce **v** with the word that also begins with the sound **v.** The sounds get glued to each other in the process of speaking and it's hard to understand whether the person speaking is saying "on Tuesday" or just "Tuesday." You use **vo,** however, only if the stress of the following word falls on the first syllable. That's why we can use **v** rather than **vo** when we say **v voskryesyen'ye** (on Sunday).

Other phrases related to the days of the week include

- **dyen'** (dyen'; day)
- **syegodnya** (see-*vohd*-nye; today)
- **syegodnya utrom** (see-*vohd*-nye *oo*-truhm; this morning)
- **syegodnya vyechyerom** (see-*vohd*-nye *vye*-chee-ruhm; this evening)
- **nyedyelya** (nee-*dye*-lya; week)

Talking about time relative to the present

Just as in English, Russian has lots of phrases to talk about a certain time in the past or future that relates to the present moment. Some time-related words that you may hear or say often in Russian are

- **syejchas** (see-*chahs*; now)
- **skoro** (*skoh*-ruh; soon)
- **pozdno** (*pohz*-nuh; late)
- **pozzhye** (*poh*-zheh; later)
- **rano** (*rah*-nuh; early)
- **ran'shye** (*rahn'*-sheh; earlier)
- **vchyera** (vchee-*rah*; yesterday)
- **pozavchyera** (puh-zuhf-chee-*rah*; the day before yesterday)
- **zavtra** (*zahf*-truh; tomorrow)
- **poslyezavtra** (*poh*-slee-*zahf*-truh; the day after tomorrow)

If you want to express that something will happen in a week, a month, or a year, you use **chyeryez** plus the accusative form of either **nyedyelya** (nee-*dye*-lya; week), **myesyats** (*mye*-seets; month), or **god** (goht; year):

- **chyeryez nyedyelyu** (*cheh*-reez nee-*dye*-lyu; in a week)
- **chyeryez myesyats** (*cheh*-reez *mye*-seets; in a month)
- **chyeryez god** (*cheh*-reez goht; in a year)

To say that something happened last week, month, or year, you say

- **na proshloj nyedyele** (nuh *prohsh*-luhy nee-*dye*-lee; last week)
- **v proshlom myesyatsye** (v *prohsh*-luhm *mye*-see-tseh; last month)
- **v proshlom godu** (v *prohsh*-luhm gah-*doo*; last year)

Together Wherever We Go: Making Plans to Go Out

It's always more fun to go out on the town with friends. In the following sections, we give you all the words and expressions you need to invite your friends out with you, and we tell you how to accept or decline invitations you receive. We also tell you how to find out what time an event starts.

Do you want to go with me?



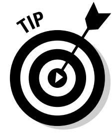
Here are common phrases people use to invite you to do things with them:

- **Pojdyom v . . .** (pahy-*dyom* v; Let's go to the . . .; informal)
- **Pojdyomtye v . . .** (pahy-*dyom*-tee v; Let's go to the . . .; formal or plural)
- **Davaj pojdyom v . . .** (duh-*vahy* pahy-*dyom v*; Let's go to the . . .; informal)
- **Davajtye pojdyom v . . .** (duh-*vahy*-tee pahy-*dyom v*; Let's go to the . . .; formal or plural)
- **Ty khochyesh' pojti v . . .** (tih *khoh*-cheesh' pahy-*tee* v; Do you want to go to the . . .; informal)
- **Vy khotitye pojti v . . .** (vih khah-*tee*-tee pahy-*tee* v; Do you want to go to the . . .; formal or plural)

To express "Do you want to . . . ," you say either **Vy khotitye . . .** (vih khah-*tee*-tee; Do you want to . . .; formal) or **Ty khochyesh' . . .** (tih *khoh*-cheesh; Do you want to . . .; informal) plus a verb infinitive. For example, the informal version of "Do you want to watch a movie?" is **Ty khochyesh' smotryet' film'?**

(tih *khoh*-cheesh smah-*tret'* feel'm). The formal version of "Do you want to play soccer?" is **Vy khotitye igrat' v futbol?** (vih khah-*tee*-tee ee-*graht* v foot-*bohl*). For more on infinitives, see Chapter 2.

Don't forget to use the formal form of you (**vy**) when inviting somebody you don't know too well to do something. For more info, see Chapter 3.



Davaj/davajtye is not only an invitation formula but also a very useful construction in almost any social situation. You can use it to suggest doing something: **Davajtye zakroyem okno** (duh-*vahy*-tee zuhk-*roh*-eem ahk-*noh*; Let's close the window). It's also an easy way to agree to do something with a good deal of enthusiasm: **Davaj pojdyom v kino! — Davaj!** (dah-*vahy* pahy-*dyom* v kee-*noh* — dah-*vahy*; Let's go to the movies — Sure, let's do it!) Some young Russians even use it as an informal "good-bye": **Nu, davaj!** (noo dah-*vahy*; Take care, see you later!)

To let everybody around know that you want to go somewhere tonight, you may say **Ya khochu pojti v . . . syegodnya vyechyerom** (ya khah-*choo* pahy-*tee* f . . . see-*vohd*-nye *vye*-chee-ruhm; I want to go to . . . tonight).

To make plans to go somewhere on a certain day of the week, you can use either **Davaj/davajtye pojdyom . . .** or **Ya khochu pojti v . . .** + one of the expressions denoting days of the week, which we cover earlier in this chapter. For example, "I want to go to the movies on Thursday" would be **Ya khochu pojti v kino v chyetvyerg** (ya khah-*choo* pahj-tee f kee-*noh* f cheet-*vyerk*).

After you ask someone to make plans with you (or after someone asks you), the big question is whether to decline or accept. We cover both options in the following sections.



Declining an invitation

Russians don't easily take **nyet** for an answer! So if you need to decline an invitation, we recommend softening your response with one of the following:

- **K sozhalyeniyu, ya nye mogu** (k suh-zhuh-*lye*-nee-yu ya nee mah-*goo*; Unfortunately, I can't)
- **Ochyen' zhal', no ya v etot dyen' zanyat** (*oh*-cheen' zhahl' noh ya v *eh*-tuht dyen' *zah*-neet; I am very sorry, but I am busy that day)
- **Mozhyet byt', v drugoj dyen'?** (*moh*-zhiht biht' v droo-*gohy* dyen'; Maybe on a different day?)
- **Mozhyet, luchshye pojdyom v kafye?** (*moh*-zhiht *looch*-shih pahy-*dyohm* f kah-*feh*; Maybe we could go to a coffee shop instead?)



Accepting an invitation

Here are some ways to spice up your **da:**

- **Spasibo, s udovol'stviyem!** (spah-*see*-buh s oo-dah-*vohl'*-stvee-eem; Thank you, I would be happy to!)
- **Bol'shoye spasibo, ya obyazatyel'no pridu.** (bahl'-*shoh*-ee spuh-*see*-buh, ya ah-bee-*zah*-teel'-nuh pree-*doo*; Thank you very much, I'll come by all means.)
- **Spasibo, a kogda? Vo skol'ko?** (spah-*see*-buh ah kahg-*dah*? vah *skohl'*-kuh?; Thank you, and when? What time?)

What time does it start?

If you want to know when an event (such as a movie or a performance) begins, this is how you ask: **Kogda nachinayetsya . . . ?** (kahg-*dah* nuh-chee-*nah*-eet-sye; When does . . . start?) The event you're asking about goes into the nominative case. (Check out Chapter 2 for more about cases.) For example, "When does the film start?" would be **Kogda nachinayetsya fil'm?** (kahg-*dah* nuh-chee-*nah*-eet-sye feel'm)



When talking about event start times, the verb "to start/to begin" is indispensable. Here's how you translate it into Russian:

- If the verb "to start/to begin" has an object, translate it into Russian as **nachinat',** as in **My nachinayem fil'm** (mih nuh-chee-*nah*-eem feel'm; We are beginning the show). The object must go into the accusative case.
- If the verb "to start/to begin" doesn't have an object, translate it as **nachinat'sya,** as in **Fil'm nachinayetsya v chyetyrye tridtsat'** (feel'm nuh-chee-*nah*-eet-sye v chee-*tih*-ree *treet*-tsuht'; The show begins at 4:30).



The verb **nachinat'sya** is called a *reflexive verb.* Reflexive verbs end in **-sya** or **-s'** and don't take direct objects because their action refers back to the subject of the sentence. In the phrase **Fil'm nachinayetsya v . . . ,** what you're really saying is "The movie starts itself up at . . ." Other common reflexive verbs are **otrkyvatsya** (uht-krih-*vaht*-sye; to open) and **zakryvatsya** (zuh-krih-*vaht'*-sye; to close). See Chapter 6 for more about reflexive verbs.

On the Big Screen: Going to the Movies

Going to see a **fil'm** (feel'm; movie) in Russia may be kind of challenging because most Russian movies are — you guessed it! — in Russian. Unless you just want to enjoy the music of the language or pick up some phrases and

words here and there, your best bet is to rent Russian movies with subtitles or find a **kino** (kee-*noh*; theater) that features movies with subtitles. If, however, you want to check out a real Russian film, in the following sections we show you different types of movies, how to buy a ticket, and how to find your seat at the movie theater.



Whereas English just uses the word "theater" for a movie theater, Russian is more exact in expressing the difference between a movie theater and a play, opera, or ballet theater. The word **kino** (kee-*noh*) or the more formal **kinotyeatr** (kee-nuh-tee-*ahtr*) are the only words you can use to denote "movie theater" in Russian.

Picking a particular type of movie

Check out the following list for the names of different film genres in Russian:

- **dyetyektiv** (deh-tehk-*teef*; detective film)
- **ekranizatsiya khudozhyestvyennoj lityeratury** (eh-kruh-nee-*zah*-tsih-ye khoo-*doh*-zhihs-tvee-nuhy lee-tee-ruh-*too*-rih; screen version of a book)
- **fil'm uzhasov** (feel'm *oo*-zhuh-suhf; horror film)
- **komyediya** (kah-*mye*-dee-ye; comedy)
- **mul'tfil'm** (mool't-*feel'm*; cartoon)
- **myuzikl** (*m'yu*-zeekl; musical)
- **nauhcnaya fantastika** (nuh-*ooch*-nuh-ye fuhn-*tahs*-tee-kuh; science fiction)
- **priklyuchyenchyeskij fil'm** (pree-klyu-*chyen*-chees-keey feel'm; adventure film)
- **trillyer** (*tree*-lyer; thriller)
- **vyestyern** (*vehs*-tehrn; western)



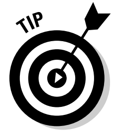
What genres do Russains prefer? It's hard to generalize. We should mention one thing, though: Russians don't seem to like happy endings as much as most Americans do, and they tend to prefer harsh reality to beautiful dreams in their movies.

Buying tickets

If you decide to go to the movies, you need a **bilyet** (bee-*lyet*; ticket). The ticket office is generally somewhere near the entrance to the movie theater. Most likely it has a sign that says **Kassa** (*kah*-suh; ticket office) or **Kassa kinotyeatra** (*kah*-suh *kee*-nuh-tee-*aht*-ruh; *Literally:* ticket office of the movie theater).

To ask for a ticket, customers often use a kind of a stenographic language. **Kassiry** (kuh-*see*-rih; cashiers) are generally impatient people, and you may have a line behind you. So try to make your request for a ticket as brief as you can. If you want to go to the 2:30 p.m. show, you say one of these phrases:

- **Odin na chyetyrnadtsat' tridtsat'** (ah-*deen* nah chee-*tihr*-nuh-tsuht' *treet*-tsuht'; One for 2:30)
- **Dva na chyetyrnadtsat' tridtsat'** (dvah nah chee-*tihr*-nuh-tsuht' *treet*-tsuht'; Two for 2:30)



Because probably only one movie will be showing at that time, the **kassir** (kuh-*seer*; cashier) will know which movie you want to see. But if two movies happen to be showing at the same time, or if you want to make sure that you get tickets to the right movie, you can simply add the phrase **na** (nah; to) plus the title of the movie to your request.

Choosing a place to sit and watch

In Russia, when you buy a ticket to the movie, you're assigned a specific seat, so the **kassir** (kuh-*seer*; cashier) may ask you where exactly you want to sit. You may hear **Gdye vy khotitye sidyet'?** (gdye vih khah-*tee*-tee see-*dyet'*; Where do you want to sit?) or **Kakoj ryad?** (kuh-*kohy* ryat; Which row?)

The best answer is **V syeryedinye** (f see-ree-*dee*-nee; in the middle). If you're far-sighted, you may want to say **Podal'shye** (pah-*dahl'*-sheh; further away from the screen). But if you want to sit closer, you say **Poblizhye** (pah-*blee*-zheh; closer to the screen). You may also specify a row by saying **pyervyj ryad** (*pyer*-viy ryat; first row) or **vtoroj ryad** (vtah-*roy* ryat; second row). See Chapter 2 for more about ordinal numbers.

When you finally get your ticket, you must be able to read and understand what it says. Look for the words **ryad** (ryat; row) and **myesto** (*myes*-tuh; seat). For example, you may see **Ryad: 5, Myesto: 14.** That's where you're expected to sit!

In the following sections, we cover two handy verbs to know at the movies: the verbs "to sit" and "to watch."

The verb "to sit"

The verb **sidyet'** (see-*dyet'*; to sit) has a very peculiar conjugation; the **d** changes to **zh** in the first person singular. Because you'll use this verb a lot, it's a good idea to have the full conjugation. Check out Table 7-1.

Table 7-1 Conjugation of Sidyet'

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya sizhu	ya see-*zhoo*	I sit or I am sitting
ty sidish'	tih see-*deesh*	You sit or You are sitting (informal singular)
on/ona/ono sidit	ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh* see-*deet*	He/she/it sits or He/she/it is sitting
my sidim	mih see-*deem*	We sit or We are sitting
vy siditye	vih see-*dee*-tee	You sit or You are sitting (formal singular and plural)
oni sidyat	ah-*nee* see-*dyat*	They sit or They are sitting

The verb "to watch"

The verb **smotryet'** (smah-*tret'*; to watch) is another useful word when you go to the movies. Table 7-2 shows how you conjugate it in the present tense.

Table 7-2 Conjugation of Smotryet'

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya smotryu	ya smah-*tryu*	I watch or I am watching
ty smotrish'	tih *smoht*-reesh	You watch or You are watching (informal singular)
on/ona/ono smotrit	ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh* *smoht*-reet	He/she/it watches or He/she/it is watching
my smotrim	mih *smoht*-reem	We watch or We are watching
vy smotritye	vih *smoht*-ree-tee	You watch or You are watching (formal singular and plural)
oni smotryat	ah-*nee* *smoht*-ryet	They watch or They are watching

It's Classic: Taking in the Russian Ballet and Theater



If a Russian ballet company happens to be in your area, don't miss it! And if you're in Russia, don't even think of leaving without seeing at least one performance either in Moscow's Bol'shoy Theater or St. Petersburg's Mariinski Theater. No ballet in the world can compare with the Russian **balyet** (buh-*lyet*; ballet) in its grand, powerful style, lavish decor, impeccable technique, and its proud preservation of the classical tradition.

The Russian **teatr** (tee-*ahtr*; theater) is just as famous and impressive as the ballet, but most theater performances are in Russian, so you may not understand a lot until you work on your Russian for a while. Still, if you want to see great acting and test your Russian knowledge, by all means check out the theater, too!

In the following sections, we show how to get your tickets and what to do during the intermission.

Handy tips for ordering tickets

The technique of buying a ticket to the ballet or theater is basically the same as it is for the movie theater. Each performance hall has a **kassa** (*kah*-suh; ticket office) and a **kassir** (kuh-*seer*; cashier). You may hear **Gdye vy khotitye sidyet'?** (gdye vih khah-*tee*-tee see-*dyet'*; Where do you want to sit?) or **Kakoj ryad?** (kah-*kohy* ryat; Which row?) See the sections "Buying tickets" and "Choosing a place to sit and watch" earlier in this chapter.

Your answer to this question is a little bit different than in a movie theater. If you prefer a centrally located seat, you say **V partyerye** (f puhr-*teh*-ree; In the orchestra seats). But a Russian ballet hall is more complicated than a movie theater, and it has many other seating options you may want to consider, depending on your budget and taste:

- **lozha** (*loh*-zhuh; box seat)
- **byenuar** (bee-noo-*ahr*; lower boxes)
- **byel'etazh** (behl'-eh-*tahsh*; tier above **byenuar**)
- **yarus** (*ya*-roos; tier above **bel'ehtazh**)
- **galyeryeya** (guh-lee-*rye*-ye; the last balcony)
- **balkon** (buhl-*kohn*; balcony)

You can try your luck at ordering tickets over the phone too. If you're lucky enough to have somebody pick up the phone when you call the ticket office, and you're a male, you say **Ya khotyel by zakazat' bilyet na . . .** (ya khah-*tyel* bih zuh-kuh-*zaht'* bee-*lyet* nah; I would like to order a ticket for . . .) + the name of the performance. If you're a female, you say **Ya khotyela by zakazat' bilyet na . . .** (ya khah-*tye*-luh bih zuh-kuh-*zaht'* bee-*lyet* nah; I would like to order a ticket for . . .) + the name of the performance.

Next, you most likely hear **Na kakoye chislo?** (nah kah-*koh*-ee chees-*loh*; For what date?) Your response should begin with **na** (nah; for) followed by the date you want to attend the performance, such as **Na pyatoye maya** (nuh *pya*-tuh-ye *mah*-ye; For May 5). You can also say things like **na syegodnya** (nah see-*vohd*-nye; for today) or **na zavtra** (nuh *zahf*-truh; for tomorrow). And if you want to buy a ticket for a specific day of the week, you say **na** plus the day of the week in the accusative case. For example, "for Friday" is **na pyatnitsu** (nuh *pyat*-nee-tsoo; for Friday).



When you indicate a date, use the ordinal number and the name of the month in the genitive case. For more information on ordinal numerals, see Chapter 2. For information on months, see Chapter 11.

Things to do during the intermission

During the **antrakt** (uhn-*trahkt*; intermission), we recommend that you take a walk around the **koridor** (kuh-ree-*dohr*; hall) and look at the pictures of the past and current **aktyory** (uhk-*tyo*-rih; actors), **aktrisy** (uhk-*tree*-sih; actresses), **balyeriny** (buh-lee-*ree*-nih; ballerinas), and **rezhissyory** (ree-zhih-*syo*-rih; theater directors) that are usually displayed. Another thing you may want to do is grab a bite to eat at the **bufyet** (boo-*fyet*; buffet), which is designed to make you feel that coming to the theater is a very special occasion. Typical buffet delicacies are **butyerbrody s ikroj** (*boo*-tehr-broht s eek-*rohy*; caviar sandwiches), **butyerbrody s kopchyonoj ryboj** (*boo*-tehr-broht s kuhp-*chyo*-nuhy *rih*-buhy; smoked fish sandwiches), **pirozhnyye** (pee-*rohzh*-nih-ee; pastries), **shokolad** (shuh-kah-*laht*; chocolate), and **shampanskoye** (shuhm-*pahn*-skuh-ee; champagne).



Spectators aren't allowed to wear overcoats, raincoats, or hats in the seating area. Theater-goers are expected to leave street clothing in the **gardyerob** (guhr-dee-*rohp*; cloakroom). Marching into a seating area with your coat or hat on may anger the theater attendants, who won't hesitate to express it to you quite loudly in public.

Enjoying (or just plain surviving) the Philharmonic

Are you a classical music lover? If so, then the Russian Philharmonic may be just what you're looking for. But if not, then we recommend you try to avoid the Philharmonic, even if tickets are free. If you're not used to classical music or if you can tolerate it only in limited amounts of time, going to the Philharmonic may be a very trying experience. For one thing, you have to sit almost motionless for over two hours, staring at the **orkyestr** (ahr-*kyestr*, the orchestra) or **ispolnityel'** (ees-pahl-*nee*-teel'; performer/soloist). Secondly, you're not allowed to talk with your friend sitting next to you, eat candy, chew gum, or produce any sound that may disturb your fellow music lovers.

When you're at the Philharmonic, you're expected to do one thing and one thing only: **slushat' muzyku!** (*sloo*-shuht' *moo*-zih-koo; to listen to the music!) Whether you actually hear the music is up to you!

Culture Club: Visiting a Museum



Russians are a nation of museum-goers. Visiting a **myzyej** (moo-*zyey*; museum) is seen as a "culture" trip. This view explains why Russian parents consider their first duty to be taking their kids to all kinds of museums on a weekend. Apart from the fact that Russian cities and even villages usually have a lot of museums, whenever Russians go abroad they immediately start looking for museums they can go to. A trip anywhere in the world should certainly contain a number of museums.

In almost every city you're likely to find the following museums to satisfy your hunger for culture:

- **Muzyej istorii goroda** (moo-*zyey* ees-*toh*-ree-ee *goh*-ruh-duh; museum of the town history)
- **Muzyej istorii kraya** (moo-*zyey* ees-*toh*-ree-ee *krah*-ye; regional history museum)
- **Istorichyeskij muzyej** (ee-stah-*ree*-chees-keey moo-*zyey*; historical museum)
- **Kartinnaya galyeryeya** (kuhr-*tee*-nuh-ye guh-lee-*rye*-ye; art gallery)
- **Etnografichyeskij muzyej** (eht-nuh-gruh-*fee*-chees-keey moo-*zyey*; ethnographic museum)

Also, you may want to visit any of the large number of Russian museums dedicated to famous and not so famous Russian **pisatyeli** (pee-*sah*-tye-lee; writers), **poety** (pah-*eh*-tih; poets), **aktyory** (uhk-*tyo*-rih; actors) and **aktrisy**

(uhk-*tree*-sih; actresses), **khudozhniki** (khoo-*dohzh*-nee-kee; artists), **uchyonyye** (oo-*choh*-nih-ee; scientists), and **politiki** (pah-*lee*-tee-kee; politicians). For example, in St. Petersburg alone, you find the A.S. Pushkin museum, F.M. Dostoyevsky museum, A.A. Akhmatova museum, and many, many more — almost enough for every weekend of the year.



In addition to the previously listed museums, you should also know that a lot of former tsar residences were converted into museums by the special decree of the new Soviet government after the October revolution of 1917. At that time, one of the main purposes of this action was to show the working people of Russia the revolting luxury the former Russian rulers lived in by exploiting their people. A lot of these museums are in St. Petersburg and its vicinity. Four of the most popular are **Zimnyj Dvoryets** (*zeem*-neey dvah-*ryets*; Winter Palace)**, Lyetnij Dvoryets Pyetra Vyelikogo** (*lyet*-neey dvah-*ryets* peet-*trah* vee-*lee*-kuh-vuh; Summer Palace of Peter the Great), **Yekatirininskij Dvoryets** (yee-kuh-tee-*ree*-neens-skeey dvah-*ryets*; Catherine's Palace), and **Pavlovskij Dvoryets** (*pahv*-luhf-skeey dvah-*ryets*; Paul's Palace).

Some other words and expressions you may need in a museum are

- **ekskursiya** (ehks-*koor*-see-ye; tour)
- **ekskursovod** (ehks-koor-sah-*voht*; guide)
- **ekskursant** (ehks-koor-*sahnt*; member of a tour group)
- **putyevodityel'**(poo-tee-vah-*dee*-teel'; guidebook)
- **zal** (zahl; exhibition hall)
- **eksponat** (ehks-pah-*naht*; exhibit)
- **vystavka** (*vihs*-tuhf-kuh; exhibition)
- **ekspozitsiya** (ehks-pah-*zee*-tsih-ye; display)
- **iskusstvo** (ees-*koos*-tvuh; arts)
- **kartina** (kuhr-*tee*-nuh; painting)
- **skul'ptura** (skool'-*ptoo*-ruh; sculpture or piece of sculpture)
- **Muzyyej otkryvayetsya v . . .** (moo-*zyey* uht-krih-*vah*-eet-sye v; The museum opens at . . .)
- **Muzyyej zakryvayetsya v . . .** (moo-*zyey* zuh-krih-*vah*-eet-sye v; The museum closes at . . .)
- **Skol'ko stoyat vkhodnyye bilyety?** (*skohl'*-kuh *stoh*-eet fkhahd-*nih*-ee bee-*lye*-tih; How much do admission tickets cost?)

How Was It? Talking about Entertainment



After you've been out to the ballet, theater, museum, or a movie, you probably want to share your impressions with others. The best way to share these impressions is by using a form of the verb **nravitsya** (*nrah*-veet-sye; to like). (For details on the present tense of this verb, see Chapter 6.) To say that you liked what you saw, you may want to say **Mnye ponravilsya spyektakl'/fil'm** (mnye pahn-*rah*-veel-sye speek-*tahkl'*/feel'm; I liked the performance/movie).

If you didn't like the production, just add the particle **nye** before the verb: **Mnye nye ponravilsya spyektakl'/fil'm** (mnye nee pahn-*rah*-veel-sye speek-*tahkl'*/feel'm; I did not like the performance/movie).

If you really loved a museum you visited, you say **Mnye ochen' ponravilsya muzyej** (mnye *oh*-cheen' pahn-*rah*-veel-sye moo-*zyey*; I loved the museum).



Don't use **lyubil** (lyu-*beel*; loved) in this situation. The past tense of the verb **lyubit'** (lyu-*beet'*; to love) means "I used to love," which isn't exactly what you want to say here. To read more about the verb **lyubit',** see Chapter 8.

If you want to elaborate on your opinion about the performance or museum, you may want to use words and phrases like

- **potryasayush'ye!** (puh-tree-*sah*-yu-sh'ee; amazing!)
- **khoroshii balyet/spyektakl'/kontsyert** (khah-*roh*-shihy buh-*lyet*/speek-*tahkl'*/kahn-*tsehrt*; a good ballet/performance/concert)
- **plokhoj balyet/spyektakl'/fil'm** (plah-*khohy* buh-*lyet*/speek-*tahkl'*/feel'm; a bad ballet/performance/film)
- **Eto byl ochyen' krasivyj balyet/spyektakl'/muzyej.** (*eh*-tuh bihl *oh*-cheen' krah-*see*-vihy buh-*lyet*/speek-*tahkl'*/moo-*zyey*; It was a very beautiful ballet/performance/museum.)
- **Eto byl ochyen' skuchnyj fil'm/spyektakl'/myzyej.** (*eh*-tuh bihl *oh*-cheen' *skoosh*-nihy feel'm/speek-*tahkl'*/moo-*zyey*; It was a very boring film/performance/museum.)
- **Eto byl nyeintyeryesnyj fil'm/spyektakl'/muzyej.** (*eh*-tuh bihl nee-een-tee-*ryes*-nihy feel'm/speek-*tahkl'*/ moo-*zyey*; It wasn't an interesting film/performance/museum.)

To ask a friend whether he or she liked an event, you can say **Tyebye ponravilsya spyektakl/fil'm'?** (tee-*bye* pahn-*rah*-veel-sye speek-*tahkl'*/feel'm?; Did you like the performance/movie?)

Talkin' the Talk



Natasha and John have just attended a classical ballet at the St. Petersburg Mariinskij Theater. As they're leaving the theater, they exchange their opinions of the performance.

Natasha: **Tyebye ponravilsya spyektakl'?**
tee-*bye* pahn-*rah*-veel-sye speek-*tahkl'*?
Did you like the performance?

John: **Ochyen'. Potryasayush'ye. Ochyen' krasivyj balyet. A tyebye?**
oh-cheen'. puh-tree-*sah*-yu-sh'ee. *oh*-cheen' kruh-*see*-vihy buh-*lyet* uh tee-*bye*?
A lot. It was amazing. Very beautiful ballet. And did you like it?

Natasha: **I mnye ochyen' ponravilsya etot spyektakl'. Solistka tantsyevala ochyen' khorosho. I dyekoratsii byli pryekrasnyye.**
ee mnye *oh*-cheen' pahn-*rah*-veel-sye. sah-*leest*-kuh tuhn-tseh-*vah*-luh *oh*-cheen' khuh-rah-*shoh*. ee dee-kah-*rah*-tsih-ee *bih*-lee pree-*krahs*-nih-ee
And I liked the performance a lot. The soloist danced very well. And the décor was wonderful.

Words to Know

A tyebye?	a tee-bye	And did you like it?
solistka	sah-leest-kuh	soloist
ochyen' khorosho	oh-cheen' khuh-rah-shoh	very good/well
dyekoratsii	dee-kah-raht-tsee-ee	décor
pryekrasnyye	preek-rahs-nih-ee	wonderful



Which of the following two days comes earlier during a week? Check out the correct answers in Appendix C.

1. **ponyedyel'nik**, **sryeda**
2. **chyetvyerg**, **pyatnitsa**
3. **voskryesyen'ye**, **vtornik**
4. **subbota**, **voskryesyen'ye**

Which of the two verbs – **nachinayetsya** or **nachinayet** – do you use to translate the verb "to start/to begin" in the following sentences? Check out the correct answers in Appendix C.

1. Peter begins his working day at 5 a.m.
2. The show begins at 7 p.m.
3. Dinner begins at 6 p.m.
4. The boss always begins the meeting on time.

Which of the following phrases would you probably use to express that you liked the show or performance you attended? Find the correct answers in Appendix C.

1. **Mnye ponravilsya spyektakl'.**
2. **Potryasayush'ye!**
3. **Ochyen' skuchnyj fil'm.**
4. **Nyeintyeryesnyj fil'm.**
5. **Ochyen' krasivyj balyet.**

Chapter 8

Enjoying Yourself: Recreation and Sports

In This Chapter

- Discussing your hobbies
- Reading everything from detectives to Dostoevsky
- Enjoying nature
- Collecting things, working with your hands, and playing sports

The art of conversation isn't a forgotten skill among Russians. They love trading stories, relating their experiences, and exchanging opinions. And what's a better conversation starter than asking people about things they like to do? Go ahead and tell your new acquaintances about your sports obsession, your reading habits, or your almost complete collection of Star Wars action figures. In this chapter, we show you how to talk about your hobbies. You also discover some activities that Russians especially enjoy, and find out what to say when you're participating in them.

Shootin' the Breeze about Hobbies

Before getting to the nitty-gritty of your **khobbi** (*khoh*-bee; hobby or hobbies — the word is used for both singular and plural forms), you probably want to test the water so that you don't exhaust your vocabulary of Russian exclamations discussing Tchaikovsky with someone who prefers boxing. In the following sections, you find out how to talk about your recent experiences, your plans for the weekend, and your general likes and dislikes.

What did you do last night?

The easiest way to ask this question is

- **Chto ty dyelal vchyera vyechyerom?** (shtoh tih *dye*-luhl fchee-*rah vye*-chee-ruhm; What did you do last night?; informal singular)
- **Chto vy dyelali vchyera vyechyerom?** (shtoh vih *dye*-luh-lee fchee-*rah vye*-chee-ruhm; What did you do last night?; formal singular and plural)



When you're talking about the past, the form of the verb you use depends on the gender and the number of people you're addressing and the level of formality between you. (For more information, see Chapter 2.) The following are some of the forms of the verb *to do* that you want to be familiar with:

- **dyelal** (*dye*-luhl; did/was doing; male, informal singular)
- **dyelala** (*dye*-luh-luh; did/was doing; female, informal singular)
- **dyelali** (*dye*-luh-lee; did/were doing; formal singular and plural)

You can answer the question **Chto ty dyelal vchyera vyecherom?** with

- **Nichyego** (nee-chee-*voh*; nothing)
- **Ya byl doma** (ya bihl *doh*-muh; I was at home) if you're a male
- **Ya byla doma** (ya bih-*lah doh*-muh; I was at home) if you're a female

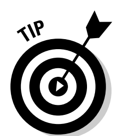
If you know that the person you're talking to was out, you can ask

- **Kuda ty vchyera khodil?** (koo-*dah* tih fchee-*rah* khah-*deel*; What did you do yesterday? *Literally:* Where did you go yesterday?; informal singular) when speaking to a male
- **Kuda ty vchyera khodila?** (koo-*dah* tih fchee-*rah* khah-*dee*-luh; What did you do yesterday? *Literally:* Where did you go yesterday?; informal singular) when speaking to a female
- **Kuda vy vchyera khodili?** (koo-*dah* vih fchee-*rah* khah-*dee*-lee; What did you do yesterday? *Literally:* Where did you go yesterday?; formal singular and plural)

To answer these questions, you can say:

- **Ya byl v . . .** (ya bihl v; I was in/at . . .) + a noun in the prepositional case if you're a male
- **Ya byla v . . .** (ya bih-*lah* v; I was in/at . . .) + a noun in the prepositional case if you're a female

- **Ya khodil v . . .** (ya khah-*deel* v; I went to . . .) + a noun in the accusative case if you're a male
- **Ya khodila v . . .** (ya khah-*deel*-luh v; I went to . . .) + a noun in the accusative case if you're a female



If you want to specify exactly when you did something (even if it wasn't yesterday or last night), you may want to use these phrases:

- **vchyera utrom** (fchee-*rah oot*-ruhm; yesterday morning)
- **vchyera vyechyerom** (fchee-*rah vye*-chee-ruhm; last night)
- **na proshloj nyedyelye** (nuh *proh*-shluhy nee-*dye*-lee; last week)
- **na vykhodnyye** (nuh vih-khahd-*nih*-ee; over the weekend)

What are you doing this weekend?



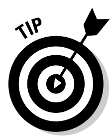
You may try to get the most out of your weeknights, but the weekend is the time for real adventure. Find out what your Russian friends do on the weekends using the following phrases:

- **Chto ty planiruyesh' dyelat' na vykhodnyye?** (shtoh tih plah-*nee*-roo-eesh' *dye*-luht' nuh vih-khahd-*nih*-ee; What are you doing this weekend? *Literally:* What do you plan to do this weekend?; informal singular)
- **Chto vy planiruyetye dyelat' na vykhodnyye?** (shtoh vih plan-*nee*-roo-ee-tee *dye*-luht' nuh vih-khahd-*nih*-ee; What are you doing this weekend? *Literally:* What do you plan to do this weekend?; formal singular and plural)
- **Chto ty obychno dyelayesh' na vykhodnyye?** (shtoh tih ah-*bihch*-nuh *dye*-luh-eesh' nuh vih-khahd-*nih*-ee; What do you usually do on the weekend?; informal singular)
- **Chto vy obychno dyelayetye na vykhodnyye?** (shtoh vih ah-*bihch*-nuh *dye*-luh-ee-tee nuh vih-khahd-*nih*-ee; What do you usually do on the weekend?; formal singular and plural)
- **Chto ty dyelayesh' syegodnya vyechyerom?** (shtoh tih *dye*-luh-eesh' see-*vohd*-nye *vye*-chee-ruhm; What are you doing tonight?; informal singular)
- **Chto vy dyelayetye syegodnya vyechyerom?** (shtoh vih *dye*-luh-ee-tee see-*vohd*-nye *vye*-chee-ruhm; What are you doing tonight?; formal singular and plural)

To answer these questions, you may say:

- **Ya planiruyu** (ya pluh-*nee*-roo-yu; I plan to . . .) + the imperfective infinitive of a verb
- **My planiruyem** (mih pluh-*nee*-roo-eem; We plan to . . .) + the imperfective infinitive of a verb
- **Ya budu** (ya *boo*-doo; I will . . .) + the imperfective infinitive of a verb
- **My budyem** (mih *boo*-deem; We will . . .) + the imperfective infinitive of a verb
- **Ya obychno** (ya ah-*bihch*-nuh; I usually . . .) + the imperfective verb in the first person singular ("I") form
- **My obychno** (mih ah-*bihch*-nuh; We usually . . .) + the imperfective verb in the first person singular ("I") form

For details about imperfective infinitives of verbs, see Chapter 2.



And if you don't have any particular plans, you may want to simply say **Ya budu doma** (ya *boo*-doo *doh*-muh; I'll be at home) or **My budyem doma** (mih *boo*-deem *doh*-muh; We'll be at home).

What do you like to do?

In conversation, you can easily switch from talking about your private life to discussing your general likes and dislikes, which Russians like to do a lot. To discover someone's likes or dislikes, you can ask one of the following:

- **Chyem ty lyubish' zanimat'sya?** (chyem tih *lyu*-beesh' zuh-nee-*maht*-sye; What do you like to do?; informal singular)
- **Chyem vy lyubitye zanimat'sya?** (chyem vih *lyu*-bee-tee zuh-nee-*maht*-sye; What do you like to do?; formal singular and plural)
- **Ty lyubish' . . . ?** (tih *lyu*-beesh'; Do you like . . . ?; informal singular) + the imperfective infinitive of a verb or a noun in the accusative case
- **Vy lyubitye . . . ?** (vih *lyu*-bee-tee; Do you like . . . ?; formal singular and plural) + the imperfective infinitive of a verb or a noun in the accusative case

For details about infinitives and cases, see Chapter 2.



You use the verb **lyubit'** (lyu-*beet'*; to love, to like) to describe your feelings toward almost anything, from **borsh'** (borsh'; borsht) to your significant other. Saying **Ya lyublyu gruppu "U2"** (ya lyu-*blyu groo*-poo yu-*too*; I like the band U2) isn't too strong, and this word is just right to express your feelings for your family members, too: **Ya lyublyu moyu malyen'kuyu syestru** (ya lyu-*blyu* mah-*yu mah*-leen'-koo-yu sees-*troo*; I love my little sister).



Just like in English, the activity you like is expressed by the infinitive of a verb after the verb **lyubit': Ya lyublyu chitat'** (ya lyu-*blyu* chee-*taht'*; I like to read). With nouns, however, the rule is different. To describe a person or object you love or like, put the noun in the accusative case: **Ya lyublyu muzyku** (ya lyu-*blyu moo*-zih-koo; I love music).

Table 8-1 shows you how to conjugate the verb **lyubit'** in the present tense.

Table 8-1 Conjugation of Lyubit'

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya lyublyu	yah lyu-*blyu*	I love/like
ty lyubish'	tih *lyu*-beesh'	You love/like (informal singular)
on/ona/ono lyubit'	on/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh lyu*-beet'	He/she/it loves/likes
my lyubim	mih *lyu*-beem	We love/like
vy lyubitye	vih *lyu*-bee-tee	You love/like (plural singular and formal)
oni lyubyat	ah-*nee lyu*-byet	They love/like



After Russians find out what you like to do, they're likely to come up with activities you can do together. To find out how to extend and respond to invitations, check out Chapter 7. And even if you have absolutely no interests in common, an invitation is still likely to follow: **Prikhoditye v gosti!** (pree-khah-*dee*-tee v *gohs*-tee; Come to visit!)

Reading All About It

An American who has traveled in Russia observed that on the Moscow metro, half the people are reading books, and the other half are holding beer bottles. But we don't agree with such a sharp division. Some Russians can be holding a book in one hand and a beer bottle in the other!

But, all joking aside, Russians are still reported to read more than any other nation in the world. So, get prepared to discuss your reading habits using phrases we introduce in the following sections.



Russian writers you just gotta know

A reading nation has to have some outstanding authors, and Russians certainly do. Russia is famous for the following writers:

- **Chekhov,** or **Chyekhov** (*cheh*-khuhf) in Russian, is up there with Shakespeare and Ibsen on the Olympus of world dramaturgy. His *Cherry Orchard* and *The Seagull* are some of the most heart-breaking comedies you'll ever see.
- **Dostoevsky,** or **Dostoyevskij** (duh-stah-*yehf*-skee) in Russian, is the reason 50 percent of foreigners decide to learn Russian. He was a highly intense, philosophical, 19th-century writer, whose tormented and yet strangely lovable characters search for truth while throwing unbelievably scandalous scenes in public places. "The Grand Inquisitor's Monologue" from his *Brothers Karamazov* is probably the most frequently cited "favorite literary passage" among politicians all over the world.
- **Pushkin,** or **Pushkin** (*poosh*-keen) in Russian, is someone you can mention if you want to soften any Russian's heart. Pushkin did for Russian what Shakespeare did for English, and thankful Russians keep celebrating his birthday and putting up more and more of his statues in every town.
- **Tolstoy,** or **Tolstoj** (tahl-*stohy*) in Russian, was a subtle psychologist and connoisseur of the human soul. His characters are so vivid, you seem to know them better than you do your family members. Reading Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* or *War and Peace* is the best-discovered equivalent of living a lifetime in 19th-century Russia.

Have you read it?

When you talk about reading, a handy verb to know is **chitat'** (chee-*taht'*; to read). This verb is a regular verb (see Chapter 2 for more information). Here are some essential phrases you need in a conversation about reading:

- **Ya chitayu . . .** (ya chee-*tah*-yu; I read/am reading . . .) + a noun in the accusative case
- **Chto ty chitayesh'?** (shtoh tih chee-*tah*-eesh'; What are you reading?; informal singular)
- **Chto vy chitayetye?** (shtoh vih chee-*tah*-ee-tee; What are you reading?; formal singular and plural)
- **Ty chital . . . ?** (tih chee-*tahl*; Have you read . . . ?; informal singular) + a noun in the accusative case when speaking to a male
- **Ty chitala . . . ?** (tih chee-*tah*-luh; Have you read . . . ?; informal singular) + a noun in the accusative case when speaking to a female
- **Vy chitali . . . ?** (vih chee-*tah*-lee; Have you read . . . ?; formal singular and plural) + a noun in the accusative case

What do you like to read?

So you're ready to talk about your favorite **kniga** (*knee*-guh; book) or **knigi** (*knee*-gee; books). Here are some words to outline your general preferences in literature, some of which may sound very familiar:

- **lityeratura** (lee-tee-ruh-*too*-ruh; literature)
- **proza** (*proh*-zuh; prose)
- **poyeziya** (pah-*eh*-zee-ye; poetry)
- **romany** (rah-*mah*-nih; novels)
- **povyesti** (*poh*-vees-tee; tales)
- **rasskazy** (ruhs-*kah*-zih; short stories)
- **p'yesy** (*p'ye*-sih; plays)
- **stikhi** (stee-*khee*; poems)

The conversation probably doesn't end with you saying **Ya lyublyu chitat' romany** (ya lyu-*blyu* chee-*taht'* rah-*mah*-nih; I like to read novels). Somebody will ask you: **A kakiye romany vy lyubitye?** (ah kuh-*kee*-ee rah-*mah*-nih vih *lyu*-bee-tee; And what kind of novels do you like?) To answer this question, you can simply say **Ya lyublyu** (ya lyu-*blyu*; I like . . .) plus one of the following genres:

- **sovryemyennaya proza** (suhv-ree-*mye*-nuh-ye *proh*-zuh; contemporary fiction)
- **dyetyektivy** (deh-tehk-*tee*-vih; mysteries)
- **trillyery** (*tree*-lee-rih; thrillers)
- **boyeviki** (buh-ee-vee-*kee*; action novels)
- **vyestyerny** (*vehs*-tehr-nih; Westerns)
- **istorichyeskaya proza** (ees-tah-*ree*-chees-kuh-ye *proh*-zuh; historical fiction)
- **fantastika** (fuhn-*tahs*-tee-kuh; science fiction)
- **lyubovnyye romany** (lyu-*bohv*-nih-ee rah-*mah*-nih; romance)
- **biografii** (bee-ahg-*rah*-fee-ee; biographies)
- **istorichyeskiye isslyedovaniya** (ees-tah-*ree*-chees-kee-ee ees-*lye*-duh-vuh-nee-ye; history, *Literally:* historical research)
- **myemuary** (meh-moo-*ah*-rih; memoirs)



Many Russian last names, like the famous Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, decline like adjectives. Even in their initial form, in the nominative case, they sound similar. When you talk about works by a specific author, you put the name of the author in the genitive case, and place it after the word **knigi** (*knee*-gee; books): **knigi Pushkina** (*knee*-gee *poosh*-kee-nuh; books by Pushkin). The genitive case conveys the meaning "belonging to someone, pertaining to someone, of someone." Examples include: **p'yesy Shyekspira** (*p'ye*-sih shehk-*spee*-ruh; Shakespeare's plays), and **rasskazy Chekhova** (ruhs-*kah*-zih *cheh*-khuh-vuh; short stories by Chekhov). For more on cases, see Chapter 2.

Now you're well-prepared to talk about literature, but what about the news, political commentary, and celebrity gossip? These phrases can help:

- **zhurnal** (zhoor-*nahl*; magazine)
- **gazyeta** (guh-*zye*-tuh; newspaper)
- **novosti** (*noh*-vuhs-tee; the news)
- **novosti v intyernyetye** (*noh*-vuhs-tee v een-tehr-*neh*-tee; news on the Internet)
- **stat'ya** (stuh-*t'ya*; article)
- **komiksy** (*koh*-meek-sih; comic books)

Talkin' the Talk



It's Claire's first time in a Russian library. A friendly **bibliotekar'** (beeb-lee-ah-*tye*-kuhr'; librarian) starts a conversation.

Bibliotekar': **Vy lyubitye chitat'?**
vih *lyu*-bee-tee chee-*taht'*?
Do you like to read?

Claire: **Da, ochyen' lyublyu. Osobyenno romany.**
dah, *oh*-cheen' lyu-*blyu*. ah-*soh*-bee-nuh rah-*mah*-nih.
Yes, I like it very much. Especially novels.

Bibliotekar': **A kakie romany, istorichyeskiye ili dyetyektivy?**
ah kuh-*kee*-ee rah-*mah*-nih, ees-tah-*ree*-chees-kee-ee *ee*-lee deh-tehk-*tee*-vih?
And what kind of novels, historical or mysteries?

Claire: **Bol'shye vsyego ya lyublyu fantastiku.**
bohl'-sheh vsee-*voh* ya lyu-*blyu* fuhn-*tahs*-tee-koo.
Most of all, I like science fiction.

Words to Know

osobyenno	ah-soh-bee-nuh	especially
istorichyeskiye	ees-tah-ree-chees-kee-ee	historical
dyetyektivy	deh-tehk-tee-vih	mystery
bol'she vsego	bohl'-sheh vsee-voh	most of all
fantastika	fuhn-tahs-tee-kah	science fiction

Where do you find reading materials?

The answer to where you can find reading material is easy: Pretty much anywhere. At a Russian train station, you're likely to see more book and periodical stands than hot dog vendors. They won't offer the best choices, though, unless you're looking for **dyetyektivy** (deh-tehk-*tee*-vih; mystery novels) or **boyeviki** (buh-ee-vee-*kee*; action novels). For more serious literature, you have to go to **knizhnij magazin** (*kneezh*-nihy muh-guh-*zeen*; bookstore) or **bibliotyeka** (beeb-lee-ah-*tye*-kuh; library). Both bookstores and libraries are divided into **otdyely** (aht-*dye*-lih; sections):

- **Otdyel khudozhyestvyennoj lityeratury** (aht-*dyel* khoo-*doh*-zhihs-tvee-nuhy lee-tee-ruh-*too*-rih; section of fiction)
- **Otdyel uchyebnoj lityeratury** (aht-*dyel* oo-*chyeb*-nuhy lee-tee-ruh-*too*-rih; section of educational materials)
- **Spravochnyj otdyel** (*sprah*-vuhch-nihy aht-*dyel*; reference section)
- **Otdyel audio i vidyeo matyerialov** (aht-*dyel ah*-oo-dee-uh ee *vee*-dee-uh muh-tee-*r'ya*-luhf; audio and video section)

Rejoicing in the Lap of Nature

Russians love nature. Every city in Russia has big parks where numerous urban dwellers take walks, enjoy picnics, and swim in suspiciously smelling ponds. Even more so, Russians like to get out of town and enjoy the nature in the wild. Luckily, the country's diverse geography offers a wide variety of

opportunities to do so. In the following sections, you discover how to make the most out of enjoying nature in Russian.

Enjoying the country house

The easiest route to nature is through the **dacha** (*dah*-chuh), which is a little country house not far from the city that most Russians have. **Poyekhat' na dachu** (pah-*ye*-khuht' nuh *dah*-choo; to go to the dacha) usually implies an overnight visit that includes barbecuing, dining in the fresh air, and, if you're lucky, **banya** (*bah*-nye) — the Russian-style sauna. Some phrases to use during your **dacha** experience include the following:

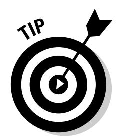
- **zharit' shashlyk** (*zhah*-reet' shuh-*shlihk*; to barbecue)
- **razvodit' kostyor** (ruhz-vah-*deet'* kahs-*tyor*; to make a campfire)
- **natopit' banyu** (nuh-tah-*peet' bah*-nyu; to prepare the sauna)
- **sad** (saht; orchard, garden)
- **ogorod** (uh-gah-*roht*; vegetable garden)
- **sobirat' ovosh'i** (suh-bee-*raht' oh*-vuh-sh'ee; to pick vegetables)
- **rabotat' v sadu** (ruh-*boh*-tuht' f suh-*doo*; to garden)

Picking foods in the forest

With their 73 percent of urban population, Russians like to go back to their roots and experience the kind of life where, instead of going to a store, you actually have to wander through the woods to find your food. Apparently, plenty of edible stuff is growing in the **lyes** (lyes; forest), and finding it is a fun activity similar to collecting points in a computer game. Just make sure to find out what you're about to eat before you put it in your mouth!

Things you may find in the forest include:

- **s'yedobniye griby** (s'ee-*dohb*-nih-ee gree-*bih*; edible mushrooms)
- **nyes'yedobniye griby** (nee-s'ee-*dohb*-nih-ee gree-*bih*; poisonous mushrooms)
- **yagody** (*ya*-guh-dih; berries)
- **dyeryevo** (*dye*-ree-vuh; tree)
- **dyeryev'ya** (dee-*ryev'*-ye; trees)
- **travy** (*trah*-vih; herbs)



To talk about collecting any or all of the foods in this section, use the verb **sobirat'** (suh-bee-*raht'*; to pick, to collect).

To describe your trip to the forest, use the expression **khodit' v lyes** (khah-*deet'* v lyes; to hike in the woods). And if your hiking trip involves a **kostyor** (kahs-*tyor*; campfire) and a **palatka** (puh-*laht*-kuh; tent), you can use the expression **idti v pokhod** (ee-*tee* f pah-*khoht*; to go camping).

Skiing in the Caucasus



The Caucasus, a picturesque mountainous region in the South of Russia, is easily accessible by train or by a flight into the city of Minvody, which actually stands for **minyeral'niye vody** (mee-nee-*rahl'*-nih-ee *voh*-dih; mineral waters). The reason for this unusual name is the numerous spas scattered around this beautiful area. Mineral water-based **sanatorii** (suh-nuh-*toh*-ree-ee; health care spas) and **doma otdykha** (dah-*mah oht*-dih-khuh; resorts) promise a cure for almost any health problem.

The best places to ski in the Caucasus (called **Kavkaz** in Russian) include **Dombaj** (dahm-*bahy*) and **Priyel'brus'ye** (pree-ehl'-*broo*-s'ee). The word **Priel'brus'ye** actually means "next to El'brus," with **El'brus** (ehl'-*broos*) being the highest mountain peak in Europe (according to those who consider the Caucasus a part of Europe).

Here are some phrases to help you organize your skiing adventure:

- **gora** (gah-*rah*; mountain)
- **gory** (*goh*-rih; mountains)
- **lyzhi** (*lih*-zhih; skis)
- **snoubord** (snoh-oo-*bohrd*; snowboard)
- **katat'sya na lyzhakh** (kuh-*taht*'sye nuh *lih*-zhuhkh; to ski)
- **prokat** (prah-*kaht*; rental)
- **vzyat' na prokat** (vzyat' nuh prah-*kaht*; to rent)
- **kanatnaya doroga** (kuh-*naht*-nuh-ye dah-*roh*-guh; cable cars)
- **kanatka** (kuh-*naht*-kuh; cable cars)
- **turbaza** (toor-*bah*-zuh; tourist center)
- **kryem ot zagara** (krehm uht zuh-*gah*-ruh; sunblock)

Lying around at Lake Baikal

With its picturesque cliffs, numerous islands, and crystal clear water, **Ozyero Baikal** (*oh*-zee-ruh buhy-*kahl*; Lake Baikal) is an unforgettable vacation spot. It's a little way off the beaten path — a direct flight from Moscow to Irkutsk, the nearest big city in the Baikal area, is five and a half hours long.

If you decide to embark on this adventure, having these words at your disposal makes your experience easier:

- **byeryeg** (*bye*-reek; shore)
- **plyazh** (plyash; beach)
- **ryechnoj vokzal** (reech-*nohy* vahk-*zahl*; port)
- **katyer** (*kah*-teer; boat)
- **parom** (puh-*rohm*; ferry)
- **prichal** (pree-*chahl*; pier)
- **pristan'** (*prees*-tuhn'; loading dock)
- **ostrov** (*ohs*-truhf; island)
- **bajdarka** (buhy-*dahr*-kuh; kayak)
- **rybalka** (rih-*bahl*-kuh; fishing)
- **lovit' rybu** (lah-*veet' rih*-boo; to fish)
- **plavat'** (*plah*-vuht'; to swim)
- **komary** (kuh-muh-*rih*; mosquitoes)

Taking a cruise ship down the Volga River

If you feel like enjoying some Russian waterways, but a flight all the way to Irkutsk just doesn't find its way into your schedule, a river cruise down the Volga River is an easily arranged alternative. You can get on a **tyeplokhod** (teep-lah-*khoht*; cruise ship) in any major city in Russia, including Moscow. Now, just grab a comfortable chair, relax **na palubye** (nuh *pah*-loo-bee; on the deck), and watch centuries of Russian history go by!



The Volga River has always been in the center of Russian history. The oldest cities, churches, and monasteries are located on its banks. In Russian folk songs and fairytales, the Volga is often called **matushka** (*mah*-toosh-kuh), which is an affectionate word for *mother*.

Each Volga traveler should know these words:

- **ryeka** (ree-*kah*; river)
- **ryechnoj kruiz** (reech-*nohy* kroo-*eez*; river cruise)
- **kayuta** (kuh-*yu*-tuh; ship cabin)
- **ekskursiya** (ehks-*koor*-see-ye; excursion)
- **ekskursovod** (ehks-koor-sah-*voht*; tour guide)
- **gid** (geet; tour guide)
- **monastyr'** (muh-nuh-*stihr'*; monastery)



When talking about the Volga River, you may run into confusion: Volga is not only Russia's most famous river, but also its most popular car!

Doing Things with Your Hands

Exploring natural wonders and architectural gems is fun, but so is discovering your internal treasures. In the following sections, find out how to talk about nifty things you can do with your hands. Don't be shy; your **talant** (tuh-*lahnt*; talent) deserves to be talked about.

Being crafty

If you're one of those lucky people who can create things with your hands, don't hesitate to tell Russians about it! They'll be very impressed. The following are some words you may want to know:

- **vyazat'** (veeh-*zaht'*; to knit)
- **shit'** (shiht'; to sew)
- **risovat'** (ree-sah-*vaht'*; to draw)
- **pisat' maslom** (pee-*saht' mahs*-luhm; to paint)
- **lyepit'** (lee-*peet'*; to sculpt)
- **lyepit' iz gliny** (lee-*peet'* eez *glee*-nih; to make pottery)
- **dyelat' loskutnyye odyeyala** (*dye*-luht' lahs-*koot*-nih-ee uh-dee-*ya*-luh; to quilt)

To ask someone whether he or she can do one of these crafts, use the verb **umyet'** (oo-*myet'*; can) plus the infinitive:

- **Ty umyeyesh pisat' maslom** (tih oo-*mye*-eesh' pee-*saht' mahs*-luhm; Can you paint?; informal singular)
- **Vy umyeyetye vyazat'?** (vih oo-*mye*-ee-tee vee-*zaht'*; Can you knit?; formal singular)

To answer these kinds of questions, you can say:

- **Da, ya umyeyu** (dah ya oo-*mye*-yu; Yes, I can)
- **Nyet, ya nye umyeyu** (nyet ya nee oo-*mye*-yu; No, I can't)

Playing music

Do you like **muzyka** (*moo*-zih-kuh; music)? To talk about playing a **muzykal'nyj instrumyent** (moo-zih-*kahl'*-nihy een-stroo-*myent*; musical instrument), use the verb **igrat'** (eeg-*raht'*; to play) + the preposition **na** (nah) and the name of the instrument in the prepositional case (for prepositional case endings, see Chapter 2).



Use the preposition **na** when you're talking about playing a musical instrument. Unlike in English, missing a preposition in the sentence **Ya igrayu na gitarye** (ya eeg-*rah*-yu nuh gee-*tah*-ree; I play the guitar) makes it meaningless in Russian.

You can ask the following questions:

- **Ty umyeyesh' igrat' na . . . ?** (tih oo-*mye*-eesh' eeg-*raht'* nah; Can you play . . . ?; informal) + the name of the instrument in the prepositional case
- **Vy umyeyetye igrat' na . . . ?** (vih oo-*mye*-ee-tee eeg-*raht'* nah; Can you play . . . ?; formal and plural) + the name of the instrument in the prepositional case

Some musical instruments you may want to mention include the following:

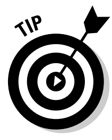
- **pianino** (pee-uh-*nee*-nuh; piano)
- **skripka** (*skreep*-kuh; violin)
- **flyejta** (*flyey*-tuh; flute)
- **klarnyet** (kluhr-*nyet*; clarinet)
- **baraban** (buh-ruh-*bahn*; drum)
- **gitara** (gee-*tah*-ruh; guitar)

- **saksofon** (suhk-sah-*fohn*; saxophone)
- **trombon** (trahm-*bohn*; trombone)
- **truba** (troo-*bah*; tuba)

Collecting Cool Stuff

If you're a proud collection owner, read through this section to find out how to talk about your hobby. These words get you started:

- **kollyektsiya** (kah-*lyek*-tsih-ye; collection)
- **kollyektsionyer** (kuh-leek-tsih-ah-*nyer*; collector)
- **marki** (*mahr*-kee; stamps)
- **monyeti** (mah-*nye*-tih; coins)
- **antikvariat** (uhn-tee-kvuh-ree-*aht*; antiques)



You can use two verbs to describe collecting something. One of them is recognizable, but rather cumbersome: **kollyektsionirovat'** (kuh-leek-tsih-ah-*nee*-ruh-vuht'; to collect). Another is more Russian and a little shorter: **sobirat'** (suh-bee-*raht'*; to collect). Here are some examples of something a collector may say:

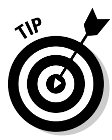
- **Ya sobirayu marki** (ya suh-bee-*rah*-yu *mahr*-kee; I collect stamps)
- **A chto vy kollyektsioniruyetue?** (ah shtoh vih kuh-leek-tsih-ah-*nee*-roo-ee-tee; And what do you collect?)

Scoring with Sports

Whatever your relationship with sport is, this section equips you with the necessary tools to talk about it. To talk about playing sports, use the verb **zanimat'sya** (zuh-nee-*maht'*-sye; to engage in/to play a sport). The name of the sport after this verb should be in the instrumental case (see Chapter 2 for case details). The word for "sports" is **sport** (spohrt); it's always singular.



Zanimat'sya is a reflexive verb. That means that at the end of it, you have a little **-sya** particle that remains there no matter how you conjugate the verb. This **-sya** particle is what remained of **syebya** (see-*bya*; oneself). The use of this particle directs the action onto the speaker. Thus, **zanimat'sya** means "to engage oneself." The same verb without the **-sya** particle, **zanimat',** means "to engage somebody else." Reflexive verbs aren't very numerous in Russian; we warn you whenever we come across them.



To conjugate the verb **zanimat'sya,** think of it as consisting of two parts: the verb **zanimat'** and **-sya.** Conjugate the verb **zanimat'** as a regular verb. Then add the particle **-sya** to the end of each conjugated form, such as **zanimayesh'sya** (zuh-nee-*mah*-eesh'-sye; you engage in). If a conjugated form of the verb ends in a vowel, then **-sya** becomes **-s',** such as in **zanimayus'** (zuh-nee-*mah*-yus'; I engage in). For more on the conjugation patterns of regular verbs, see Chapter 2.

You can ask somebody **Ty zanimayesh'sya sportom?** (tih zuh-nee-*mah*-eesh-sye *spohr*-tuhm; Do you play sports? *Literally:* Do you engage in sports?) You can answer this question by saying one of two phrases:

- **Da, ya zanimayus' . . .** (dah ya zuh-nee-*mah*-yus'; Yes, I play . . .) + the name of the sport in the instrumental case
- **Nyet, ya ne zanimayus' sportom** (nyet ya nee zuh-nee-*mah*-yus' *spohr*-tuhm; No, I don't play sports)

If you're talking about a team sport that can also be called an **igra** (eeg-*rah*; game), you can use the expression **igrat' v** (eeg-*raht'* v . . .; to play) + the name of the sport in the accusative case. For instance: **Ty igrayesh' v futbol?** (tih eeg-*rah*-eesh' f foot-*bohl*; Do you play soccer?)

Here's a list of sports you may want to talk about:

- **baskyetbol** (buhs-keet-*bohl*; basketball)
- **byejsbol** (beeys-*bohl*; baseball)
- **futbol** (foot-*bohl*; soccer)
- **vollyejbol** (vuh-leey-*bohl*; volleyball)
- **tyennis** (*teh*-nees; tennis)
- **gol'f** (gohl'f; golf)

To talk about watching a game, you can use the verb **smotryet** (smaht-*ryet'*; to watch). For more information on this verb, see Chapter 7.

Talkin' the Talk



Tom and Boris met at a party. Boris immediately starts talking about his favorite pastime, sports.

Boris: **Ty zanimayesh'sya sportom?**
tih zuh-nee-*mah*-eesh'-sye spohr-*tuhm*?
Do you play sports?

Tom: **Da, ya zanimayus' tyennisom. A ty?**
dah, ya zuh-nee-*mah*-yus' *teh*-nee-suhm. uh tih?
Yes, I play tennis. What about you?

Boris: **A ya igrayu v futbol. Ty lyubish' futbol?**
uh ya eeg-*rah*-yu f foot-*bohl*. tih *lyu*-beesh' foot-*bohl*?
I play soccer. Do you like soccer?

Tom: **Nye znayu. Ya nikogda nye vidyel igru.**
nee *znah*-yu. ya nee-kahg-*dah* nee *vee*-deel eeg-*roo.*
I don't know. I've never seen the game.

Boris: **Pravda? Togda davaj pojdyom na match "Spartak"–"Dinamo."**
prahv-duh? tahg-*dah* duh-*vahy* pahy-*dyom* nuh mahch spahr-*tahk* dee-*nah*-muh.
Really? Let's go then to see a match between "Spartak" and "Dinamo."

Tom: **Davaj! A kogda?**
duh-*vahy*! uh kahg-*dah*?
Yes, let's do it. And when?

Words to Know

Nye znayu.	nee znah-yoo	I don't know.
Ya nikogda nye vidyel igru.	ya nee-kahg-dah nee vee-deel eeg-roo	I've never seen the game.
Pravda?	prahv-duh	Really?
Togda davaj pojdyom na match.	tahg-dah duh-vahy pahy-dyom nuh mahch	Let's go then to see a match.



Match the questions in the left column with the most likely answers on the right. The correct answers are in Appendix C.

1. **Chto vy dyelayetye syegodnya vyechyerom?**
2. **Chto vi kollyektsionyruyetye?**
3. **Vy igrayetye na pianino?**
4. **Vy lyubitye futbol?**

a. **Nyet, ya lyublyu tyennis.**
b. **Ya budu doma.**
c. **Ya sobirayu marki.**
d. **Nyet, na skripkye.**

Where are you most likely to see all these things? For each group, choose an answer from the list below. The correct answers are in Appendix C.

1. **Knigi**, **zhurnaly**, **gazyety**, **otdyel audio i vidyeo matyerialov**
2. **Lyzhi**, **snoubordy**, **kanatka**, **gory**
3. **Katyer**, **ostrov**, **parom**, **baidarka**

a. **Ozyero Baikal** b. **Kavkaz** c. **knizhnij magazin**

What do they like to do? Look at this list of famous people and choose their favorite activities from the list on the right.

Vanessa Mae . . .
Renoir . . .
Michelangelo . . .
Tolstoy . . .
Santana . . .

lyubit pisat′ maslom
lyubit igrat′ na gitarye
lyubit pisat′ romany
lyubit igrat′ na skripkye
lyubit lyepit′

Chapter 9

Talking on the Phone and Sending Mail

In This Chapter

- Understanding phone basics
- Making a phone call
- Carrying on a phone conversation politely
- Sending a variety of written correspondence

Telephones have become an indispensable part of our busy lives. Thanks to modern technology, we can now talk on the phone almost anywhere. In this chapter, you discover the words and expressions you need when using a telephone. You find out basic phone vocabulary, such as different parts of the phone, and we provide you with the tips on how to start, conduct, and conclude your telephone conversations. We also tell you the basics of sending letters, e-mails, and faxes.

Ringing Up Telephone Basics

Before you find out how to make a call, knowing a little bit about the phone itself is helpful. In the following sections, we give you some basic vocabulary related to phones and describe the different types of phones and phone calls.

Brushing up on phone vocabulary

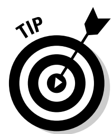
You need to know a number of important words associated with the use of the **tyelyefon** (tee-lee-*fohn*; telephone). When somebody wants to talk to you, he or she may want to **zvonit'** (zvah-*neet'*; to call) you. The caller needs to **nabirat'** (nuh-bee-*raht'*; to dial) your **nomyer tyelyefona** (*noh*-meer tee-lee-*foh*-nuh; telephone number), and when the call goes through, you hear a **zvonok** (zvah-*nohk*, ring).

The main part of the telephone is the **trubka** (*troop*-kuh; receiver). On your landline, the **trubka** rests on the **tyelyefonnyj apparat** (tee-lee-*fohn*-nihy uh-puh-*raht*; the body of the phone).



You can do a lot of different things with the **trubka.** You can **podnimat' trubku** (puhd-nee-*maht' troop*-koo; to pick up the receiver), **vyeshat' trubku** (*vye*-shuht' *troop*-koo; to hang up the receiver), or **klast' trubku** (klahst' *troop*-koo; to put down the receiver). Other words related to phones include

- **knopka** (*knohp*-kuh; button)
- **gudok** (goo-*dohk*; beep, tone)
- **dolgij gudok** (*dohl*-geey goo-*dohk*; dial tone, *Literally:* long tone)
- **korotkiye gudki** (kah-*roht*-kee-ee goot-*kee*; busy signal, *Literally:* short tones)
- **kod goroda** (koht *goh*-ruh-duh; area code)
- **tyelyefonnaya kniga** (tee-lee-*fohn*-nuh-ye *knee*-guh; telephone book)



You also need to be able to give other people your phone number and to understand the phone numbers dictated to you. Usually, Russians give phone numbers in chunks. For instance, if your phone number is 123-45-67, you say it as **sto dvadtsat' tri, sorok pyat', shyestdyesyat' syem'** (stoh *dvaht*-tsuht' tree, *soh*-ruhk pyat', shees-dee-*syat'* syem; one hundred twenty-three, forty-five, sixty-seven).

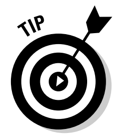
Distinguishing different types of phones

Recent advances in technology have brought many different types of phones. In addition to the standard landline, or **tyelyefon,** most people today in Russia have **sotovye tyelyefony** (*soh*-tuh-vih-ee tee-lee-*foh*-nih; cellular phones), which are also called **mobil'nye tyelyefony** (mah-*beel'*-nih-ee tee-lee-*foh*-nih; mobile phones), **trubki** (*troop*-kee; *Literally:* receivers), or **mobil'niki** (mah-*beel'*-nee-kee; mobile phones). The singular forms of these words are **sotovyj tyelyefon** (*soh*-tuh-vihy tee-lee-*fohn*; cellular phone), **mobil'nyj tyelyefon** (mah-*beel'*-nihy tee-lee-*fohn*; mobile phone), **trubka** (*troop*-kuh; mobile phone, *Literally:* receiver) and **mobil'nik** (mah-*beel'*-neek; mobile phone).

Other specific types of phones include

- **diskovyj tyelyefon** (*dees*-kuh-vihy tee-lee-*fohn*; rotary phone)
- **knopochnyj tyelyefon** (*knoh*-puhch-nihy tee-lee-*fohn*; touch-tone phone)
- **byesprovodnoj tyelyefon** (bees-pruh-vahd-*nohy* tee-lee-*fohn*; cordless phone)

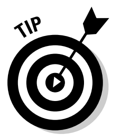
If you're not at home and you don't have a cell phone with you, look for what Russians call a **tyelyefonnaya budka** (tee-lee-*fohn*-nuh-ye *boot*-kuh; telephone booth), which is not always an easy task. Have you noticed that with the arrival of cellular phones, telephone booths have become an almost extinct species? Well, telephone booths were a dying species in Russia even before cell phones, mostly because the booth phones usually didn't work!



Our recommendation: When in Russia, try to have a reliable cell phone with you at all times. You have to remember, though, that the cell phone you use at home may not work in Russia unless you purchase a special card to insert into it that enables you to use it abroad. Another way to solve the problem is to just get a new cell phone in Russia.

Knowing different kinds of phone calls

If you call somebody in your calling area, you make a **myestnyj zvonok** (*myest*-nihy zvah-*nohk*; local call), and you aren't charged. If the person or institution you call is in a different city, you make a **myezdugorodnyj zvonok** (myezh-doo-gah-*rohd*-nihy zvah-*nohk*; long-distance call, *Literally:* intercity). If you want to call back home from Russia, you make a **myezhdunarodnyj zvonok** (myezh-doo-nuh-*rohd*-nihy zvah-*nohk*; international call).



Russia has no collect or operator-assisted calls. So when you're in Russia and you want to make a call, be sure to have a Russian-speaking friend around!

Dialing It In and Making the Call

When you want to make a phone call, you can't translate your desire into reality without first dialing the number of the person or institution you're calling. In order to **nabirat' nomyer** (nuh-bee-*raht' noh*-meer; to dial the number), use a **tsifyerblat** (tsih-feer-*blaht*; dial-plate), which, in many Russian homes, is still rotary rather than a push button. To help you handle this task, we provide you with the conjugation of the verb **nabirat'** in the present tense in Table 9-1.

Table 9-1 Conjugation of Nabirat'

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya nabirayu	ya nuh-bee-*rah*-yu	I dial or I am dialing
ty nabirayesh'	tih nuh-bee-*rah*-eesh'	You dial or You are dialing (informal singular)

(continued)

Table 9-1 *(continued)*

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
on/ona nabirayet	ohn/ah-*nah* nuh-bee-*rah*-eet	He/she dials or He/she is dialing
my nabirayem	mih nuh-bee-*rah*-eem	We dial or We are dialing
vy nabirayetye	vih nuh-bee-*rah*-ee-tee	You dial or You are dialing (formal singular and plural)
oni nabirayut	ah-*nee* nuh-bee-*rah*-yut	They dial or They are dialing



Russian makes a grammatical distinction between calling a person, calling an institution, and calling a different city or a country. The following rules apply (see Chapter 2 for more details about cases):

- If you're calling a person, use the dative case, as in **Ya khochu zvonit' Natashye** (ya khah-*choo* zvah-*neet'* nuh-*tah*-shih; I want to call Natasha).
- If you're calling an institution, after the verb, use the preposition **v** or **na** + the accusative case to indicate the institution you're calling, as in **zvonit' na rabotu** (zvah-*neet'* nuh ruh-*boh*-too; to call work) or **zvonit' v magazin** (zvah-*neet'* v muh-guh-*zeen*; to call a store).
- If you're calling a foreign country or another city, after the verb, use **v** + the accusative form of the city or country you're calling, as in **zvonit' v Amyeriku** (zvah-*neet'* v uh-*mye*-ree-koo; to call the U.S.).

Unfortunately, **zvonit'** is nothing but an infinitive, and you can't do much with infinitives if you intend to engage in serious conversation about telephone matters. So we thought it would be a good idea to provide you with the present tense of this important verb in Table 9-2.

Table 9-2 Conjugation of Zvonit'

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya zvonyu	ya zvah-*nyu*	I call or I am calling
ty zvonish'	tih zvah-*neesh*	You call or You are calling (informal singular)
on/ona zvonit	ohn/ah-*nah* zvah-*neet*	He/she calls or He/she is calling
my zvonim	mih zvah-*neem*	We call or We are calling

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
vy zvonitye	vih zvah-*nee*-tee	You call or You are calling (formal singular and plural)
oni zvonyat	ah-*nee* zvah-*nyat*	They call or They are calling

Now, imagine that you head to the phone and pick up the receiver. If you hear **dolgiye gudki** (*dohl*-gee-ee goot-*kee*; long zoom), it means that the phone is **svobodyen** (svah-*boh*-deen; not busy), and you need to be patient until somebody answers the phone. While you're waiting for somebody to answer, you may think to yourself, **Nikto nye podkhodit k tyelyefonu** (neek-*toh* nee paht-*khoh*-deet k tee-lee-*foh*-noo; Nobody is picking up the phone).

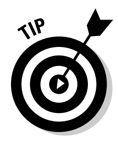
After waiting for a couple of minutes (depending on the amount of patience you have), you may say **Nikto nye podoshol k tyelyefonu** (neek-*toh* nee puh-dah-*shohl* k tee-lee-*foh*-noo; Nobody answered the phone).

If the person you're calling is already talking on the phone with somebody else, you hear **korotkiye gudki** (kah-*roht*-kee-ee goot-*kee*; busy signal, *Literally:* short tones). This signal means the phone is busy, and you need to **povyesit' trubku** (pah-*vye*-seet' *troop*-koo; to hang up) and **pyeryezvonit'** (pee-ree-zvah-*neet'*; to call back). See the next section for details on what to do when you reach the person you want to speak to.

Arming Yourself with Basic Telephone Etiquette

Every culture has its own telephone etiquette, and Russia is no exception. In the following sections, you discover how to ask for the person you want to speak to, what you may hear in response, and how to leave a message with a person or an answering machine.

Saving time by not introducing yourself



When you make a phone call in Russia, you may get the impression that the person who answers is an extremely impatient individual who can't afford the luxury of wasting time answering the phone. That's why the person's **Alyo!** (uh-*lyo*; Hello!) — a standard way to answer the phone — may sound abrupt, unfriendly, or even angry. Don't waste time introducing yourself (even if it's a business call). Hurry up and tell the person your business right away. You may also hear just **Da** (dah; Yes) or **Slushayu** (*sloo*-shuh-yu; I'm listening).

Asking for the person you want to speak to



In English, you often say something like "Is John there?" Not so in Russian. In fact, a Russian may not even understand what you mean by that question. Instead, get to your request right away, using the phrase **Mozhno . . .** (*mohzh*-nuh; May I speak to . . .) + the name of the person you want to talk to. If you want to talk to a woman named **Natalya Ivanovna,** you say **Mozhno Natalyu Ivanovnu?** (*mohzh*-nuh nuh-*tahl'*-yu ee-*vah*-nuhv-noo; Can I talk to Natalya Ivanovna?)



Note that you have to use the name of the person you want to talk to in the accusative case. That's because what you're saying is an abbreviated **Mozhno pozvat' k tyelyefonu Natalyu Ivanovnu** (*mohzh*-nuh pahz-*vaht'* k tee-lee-*foh*-noo nuh-*tahl'*-yu ee-*vah*-nuhv-noo; Can you call to the phone Natalya Ivanovna?), and the verb **pozvat'** (pahz-*vaht'*; to call) requires that the noun after it is used in the accusative case. (For more on the accusative case, see Chapter 2.) You can make this phrase more polite by adding the phrase **Bud'tye dobry** (*bood'*-tee dahb-*rih*; Will you be so kind) at the beginning.

Anticipating different responses



Here are some of the more common things you may hear in response after you ask for the person you want to speak to:

- If you call somebody at home and he or she is not at home, you most likely hear **Yego/yeyo nyet doma** (ee-*voh*/ee-*yo* nyet *doh*-muh; He/she is not at home).
- If the person you call *is* at home but he or she is not the one who answered the phone, you hear **Syejchas** (see-*chahs*; Hold on) or **Syejchas pozovu** (see-*chahs* puh-zah-*voo*; Hold on, I'll get him/her).
- When the person you want finally answers the phone (or if he or she actually picked up the phone when you called), he or she will say **Alyo** (uh-*lyo*; Hello) or **Slushayu** (*sloo*-shuh-yu; Speaking) or simply **Da** (dah; Yes).
- You probably have the wrong number if you hear **Kogo?** (kah-*voh*; Whom?) If the person knows you called the wrong number, you most likely hear **Vy nye tuda popali** (vih nee too-*dah* pah-*pah*-lee; You dialed the wrong number).

  You can also check to make sure you dialed the right number by saying something like **Eto pyat'sot dyevyanosto vosyem' sorok pyat' dvadtsat odin?** (*eh*-tuh peet-*soht* dee-vee-*nohs*-tuh *voh*-seem' *soh*-ruhk pyat' *dvaht*-tsuht' ah-*deen*; Is this five nine eight four five two one? *Literally:* Is this five hundred ninety-eight forty-five twenty-one?) If you dialed another number, you may hear **Nyet, vy nyepravil'no nabirayete** (nyet vih nee-*prah*-veel'-nuh nuh-bee-*rah*-ee-tee; No, you've dialed the wrong number).

Talkin' the Talk



Jack met Boris at a party. Boris gave Jack his phone number. It's Sunday night and Jack decides to call his new friend. **Zhensh'ina** (*zhehn*-sh'ee-nuh; a woman) answers the phone and it looks like Jack dialed the wrong number.

Zhensh'ina: **Alyo!**
uh-*lyo*!
Hello!

Jack: **Mohzno Borisa?**
mohzh-nuh bah-*ree*-suh?
Can I talk to Boris?

Zhensh'ina: **Kogo?**
kah-*voh*?
Who?

Jack: **Borisa.**
bah-*ree*-suh.
Boris.

Zhensh'ina: **Zdyes' takikh nyet.**
zdyes' tuh-*keekh* nyet.
Literally: There are no such people here.

Jack: **Izvinitye, ya nye ponyal. Chto vy skazali?**
eez-vee-*nee*-tee ya nee *poh*-neel. shtoh vih skuh-*zah*-lee?
Sorry, I did not understand. What did you say?

Zhensh'ina: **Molodoj chyelovyek, ya skazala chto zdyes' takikh nyet! Vy nye tuda popali.**
muh-lah-*dohy* chee-lah-*vyek*, ya skuh-*zah*-luh shtoh zdyes' tuh-*keekh* nyet! vih nee too-*dah* puh-*pah*-lee.
Young man, I said there is no Boris here. You dialed the wrong number.

Jack: **Nye tuda popal?**
nee too-*dah* pah-*pahl*?
I got the wrong number?

Zhensh'ina: **Molodoj chyelovyek, kakoj tyelyefon vy nabirayete? Kakoj nomyer tyelyefona vy nabirayetye?**
muh-lah-*dohy* chee-lah-*vyek,* kuh-*kohy* tee-lee-*fohn* vih nuh-bee-*rah*-ee-tee? kuh-*kohy noh*-meer tee-lee-*foh*-nuh vih nuh-bee-*rah*-ee-tee?

Young man, what telephone are you dialing? What phone number are you dialing?

Jack: **Ya nabirayu dvyesti sorok vosyem' dvyenadtsat' dyevyanosto tri.**
ya nuh-bee-*rah*-yu *dvyes*-tee *soh*-ruhk *voh*-seem' dvee-*naht*-tsuht' dee-vee-*nohs*-tuh tree.
I am dialing 248-12-93.

Zhensh'ina: **A eto dvyesti sorok vosyem' dvyenadtsat' dyevyanosto dva.**
uh *eh*-tuh *dvyes*-tee *soh*-ruhk *voh*-seem' dvee-*naht*-tsuht' dee-vee-*nohs*-tuh dvah.
And this is 248-12-92.

Jack: **Oy, izvinitye!**
ohy eez-vee-*nee*-tee!
Oh, sorry.

Zhensh'ina: **Nichyego.**
nee-chee-*voh.*
That's okay.

Words to Know

Zdyes' takikh nyet.	zdyes' tuh-keekh nyet	There's nobody by that name here.
Izvinitye.	eez-vee-nee-tee	Sorry.
Ya nye ponyal.	ya nee poh-neel	I didn't understand.
Chto vy skazali?	shtoh vih skuh-zah-lee	What did you say?
Nye tuda popal?	nee too-dah pah-pahl	I got the wrong number?
Kakoj tyelyefon vy nabirayetye?	kuh-kohy tee-lee-fohn vih nuh-bee-rah-ee-tee	What telephone are you dialing?
Kakoj nomyer tyelyefona vy nabirayete?	kuh-kohy noh-meer tee-lee-foh-nuh vih nuh-bee-rah-ee-tee	What number are you dialing?

Leaving a message with a person



If you call somebody and the person isn't available, you probably hear one of these phrases:

- **A kto yego sprashivayet?** (uh ktoh ee-*voh sprah*-shih-vuh-eet; And who is asking for him?)
- **A kto yeyo sprashivayet?** (uh ktoh ee-*yo sprah*-shih-vuh-eet; And who is asking for her?)
- **A chto yemu pyeryedat'?** (uh shtoh ee-*moo* pee-ree-*daht'*; Can I take a message?) if the person you're leaving a message for is a man
- **A chto yej pyeryedat'?** (uh shtoh yey pee-ree-*daht'*; Can I take a message?) if the person you're leaving a message for is a woman

When asked who is calling, say: **Eto zvonit** + your name (*eh*-tuh zvah-*neet*; This is . . . calling). Then you may simply want to give your phone number and say **Spasibo** (spuh-*see*-buh; thank you).

To ask to leave a message, begin your request with **A vy nye mozhyetye yemu/yey pyeryedat'?** (uh vih nee-*moh*-zhih-tee ee-*moo*/yey pee-ree-*daht'*; Can I leave a message for him/her?)



No matter what your message is, it should begin with the phrase **Pyeryedajte pozhalujsta . . .** (pee-ree-*dahy*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh; Please tell him/her . . .) Most likely, you want to say

- **Pyeryedajte pozhalujsta chto zvonil** + your name (pee-ree-*dahy*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh shtoh zvah-*neel*; Please tell him/her that . . . called) if you are a man
- **Pyeryedajte pozhalujsta chto zvonila** + your name (pee-ree-*dahy*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh shtoh zyah-*nee*-luh; Please tell him/her that . . . called) if you are a woman

Talkin' the Talk



Kira and Vyera are school friends. Kira calls Vyera to suggest going to the movies together. Vyera's mother, Olga Nikolayevna, answers the phone.

Olga Nikolayevna:	**Alyo!** uh-*lyo*! Hello!
Kira:	**Mozhno Vyeru?** *mohzh*-nuh *vye*-roo? Can I talk to Vyera?

Olga Nikolayevna:	**Vyery nyet doma. A kto yeyo sprashivayet? Eto yeyo mama.** *vye*-rih nyet *doh*-muh. uh ktoh ee-*yo sprah*-shih-vuh-eet? *eh*-tuh ee-*yo mah*-muh. Vyera is not at home. And who is it? This is her mother speaking.
Kira:	**Eto yeyo podruga Kira. Zdravstvujtye! Vy nye znayete gdye ona?** *eh*-tuh ee-*yo* pahd-*roo*-guh *kee*-ruh. *zdrahs*-tvooy-tee! vih nee *znah*-ee-tee gdye ah-*nah*? It's her friend Kira. Hello! Do you happen to know where she is?
Olga Nikolayevna:	**A, Kira? Kira, a Vyera poshla v bassyejn.** ah *kee*-ruh? *kee*-ruh, uh *vye*-ruh pahsh-*lah* v buh-*seh*-een. Oh, Kira? Kira, Vyera went to the swimming pool.
Kira:	**V bassyejn? Kogda ona budyet doma?** v buh-*seh*-een? kahg-*dah* ah-*nah boo*-deet *doh*-muh? To the swimming pool? When will she be home?
Olga Nikolayevna:	**Ona dolzhna vyernut'sya cheryez polchasa. Mozhyet byt' chto-nibud' pyeryedat'?** ah-*nah* dahl-*zhnah* veer-*noot'*-sye *chee*-rees puhl-chuh-*sah*. *moh*-zhit biht' *shtoh*-nee-boot' pee-ree-*daht'*? She should be back in half an hour. Would you like to leave a message?
Kira:	**Nyet, spasibo. Ya pyeryezvonyu.** nyet spuh-*see*-buh. ya pee-reez-vah-*nyu.* No, thanks. I will call her back.
Olga Nikolayevna:	**Nu, khorosho. Ya yej skazhu chto ty zvonila.** noo khuh-rah-*shoh.* ya *y*ey skuh-*zhoo* shtoh tih zvah-*nee*-luh. Okay. I will tell her that you called.
Kira:	**Spasibo.** spuh-*see*-buh. Thanks.

Words to Know

Vy nye znayetye gdye ona?	vih nee znah-ee-tee gdye ah-nah	Do you happen to know where she is?
Kogda ona budyet doma?	kahg-dah ah-nah boo-deet doh-muh	When will she be home?
Ona dolzhna vyernut'sya	ah-nah dahl-zhnah veer-noot'-sye	She should be back . . .
Mozhyet byt' chto-nibud' pyeryedat'?	moh-zhit biht' shtoh-nee-boot' pee-ree-daht'	Would you like to leave a message?
Ya pyeryezvonyu.	ya pee-reez-vah-nyu	I'll call back.
Ya yej skazhu, chto ty zvonila.	ya yey skuh-zhoo shtoh tih zvah-nee-luh	I will tell her that you called.

Talking to an answering machine

Avtootvyetchiki (uhf-tuh-aht-*vyet*-chee-kee; answering machines) are still relatively rare in Russian homes. But just in case you get an **avtootvyetchik** (answering machine), the first thing you'll probably hear is **Zdravstvujtye, nas nyet doma. Ostav'tye, pozhalujsta soobsh'yeniye poslye gudka.** (*zdrah*-stvooy-tee, nahs nyet *doh*-muh. ahs-*tahf*-tee, pah-*zhahl*-stuh suh-ahp-*sh'ye*-nee-ee *pohs*-lee goot-*kah*; Hello, we're not home. Please leave your message after the beep.)

On a cell phone answering machine, you're likely to hear a slightly different message than on a regular answering machine: **Abonyent nye dostupyen. Ostav'tye soobsh'yeniye poslye signala.** (uh-bah-*nyent* nee dahs-*too*-peen ahs-*tahf*-tee suh-ahp-*sh'ye*-nee-ee *pohs*-lee seeg-*nah*-luh; The person you are calling is not available. Leave a message after the beep.)



When leaving a message, you can say something along these lines: **Zdravstvujtye. Eto** + your name. **Pozvonitye mnye pozhalujsta. Moj nomyer tyelyefona** + your phone number (*zdrah*-stvooy-tee. *eh*-tuh . . . puhz-vah-*nee*-tee mnye pah-*zhal*-stuh. moy *noh*-meer tee-lee-*foh*-nuh . . . ; Hello! This is . . . Call me please. My phone number is . . .)

Sending a Letter, a Fax, or an E-mail

Strange as it may seem today in the age of e-mail and cell phones, people still sometimes write and send **pis'ma** (*pees'*-muh; letters).



The imperfective verb **posylat'** (puh-sih-*laht'*; to send) and its perfective counterpart **poslat'** (pahs-*laht'*) have different patterns of conjugation. While **posylat'** is a nice regular verb and **poslat'** has nothing special about it in the past tense, it has a peculiar pattern of conjugation in the future tense, shown in Table 9-3. You may need to know it so you can promise your new Russian friends that you'll send them letters, e-mail, and faxes. (Check out Chapter 2 for more about verbs in general, including imperfective and perfective verbs.)

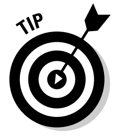
Table 9-3 Conjugation of Poslat' in the Future Tense

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya poshlyu	ya pahsh-*lyu*	I will send
ty poshlyosh'	tih pahsh-*lyosh'*	You will send (informal singular)
on/ona poshlyot	ohn/ah-nah pahsh-*lyot*	He/she will send
my poshlyom	mih pahsh-*lyom*	We will send
vy poshlyotye	vih pah-*shlyo*-tee	You will send (formal singular and plural)
oni poshlyut	ah-*nee* pahsh-*lyut*	They will send

Just as in English, when sending written correspondence in Russian, it's customary to address the person you're writing to with the word "dear":

- **dorogoj** (duh-rah-*gohy*; dear; masculine) + the person's name
- **dorogaya** (duh-rah-*gah*-ye; dear; feminine) + the person's name
- **dorogiye** (duh-rah-*gee*-ee; dear; plural) + the people's names

In more formal situations, you should also include the date in upper left-hand corner. (For more info on dates, see Chapter 11.)



The close of your letter may include the standard **vash** (vahsh; yours; formal) or **tvoj** (tvohy; yours; informal) plus your name. Or you use one of the following phrases, depending on your intention and relationship with the recipient:

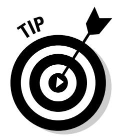
- **s uvazheniyem** (s oo-vuh-*zheh*-nee-eem; respectfully)
- **s lyubov'yu** (s lyu-*bohv'*-yu; with love)
- **tseluyu** (tsih-*loo*-yu; love, *Literally:* I kiss you)

When you talk about **imyeil** (ee-*meh*-eel; e-mail) and **faks** (fahks; fax), use the same verb pair of **posylat'** and **poslat'** (to send) as you do when you talk about letters. For example, suppose you want to promise your friend that you'll send him an e-mail; you simply say **Ya poshlyu tyebye imejl** (ya pahsh-*lyu* tee-*bye* ee-*meh*-eel; I'll e-mail you). If you promise to send him a fax, you say **Ya poshlyu tyebye faks** (ya pahsh-*lyu* tee-*bye* fahks; I'll send you a fax). You also use the same verb pair when you attach documents to your e-mail. **Prikryeplyeniye** (pree-kree-*plye*-nee-ee) is the Russian (and very clumsy-sounding) equivalent for the English word "attachment."

If you want to ask somebody what his or her e-mail address is, just say **Kakoj u vas imyeil?** (kuh-*kohy* oo vahs ee-*meh*-eel; What is your e-mail address? *Literally:* What is your e-mail?) But before you ask this question, you may want to make sure that this person has an e-mail account by asking **U vas yest' imyeil?** (oo vas yest' ee-*meh*-eel; *Literally:* Do you have e-mail?)

Other words and expressions associated with correspondence include

- **pis'mo** (pees'-*moh*; letter)
- **pochtovyj yash'ik** (pahch-*toh*-vihy *ya*-sh'eek; mailbox)
- **pochta** (*pohch*-tuh; post office)
- **nomyer faksa** (*noh*-meer *fahk*-suh; fax number)
- **prochitat' imyejly** (pruh-chee-*taht'* ee-*mehy*-lih; to check your e-mail, *Literally:* to read e-mails)



All the words in this section are helpful when you're at the office; for more details about working at an office, see Chapter 10.



Which of the following words and expressions indicate types of phones? Find the answers in Appendix C.

1. **mobil'nik**
2. **knopochnyj tyelyefon**
3. **prikryeplyeniye**
4. **pis'mo**
5. **trubka**

Put the following telephone dialogue in the right order (the right answers are in Appendix C):

a. **Mariny nyet doma. A kto yeyo sprashivayet?**

b. **Khorosho.**

c. **Eto Pyetya. Pyeryedajtye pozhalujsta chto zvonil Pyetya.**

d. **Mozhno Marinu?**

Match the Russian equivalents on the left for the English phrases on the right. See Appendix C for the correct answers.

1. **Mozhno Lyenu?**	a. Can I take a message?
2. **Yeyo nyet doma.**	b. Can I talk to Lena?
3. **Vy nye tuda popali.**	c. She's not at home.
4. **A chto yej pyeryedat'?**	d. Wrong number!

Chapter 10

Around the House and at the Office

In This Chapter

- Finding a home
- Getting settled in your new place
- Applying for a job
- Functioning effectively in the workplace

As a Russian proverb says, **v gostyakh khorosho, a doma luchshye** (v gahs-*tyakh* khuh-rah-*shoh*, ah *doh*-muh *looch*-shih; East or West, home is best. *Literally:* It's good to be a guest, but it's better to be home). In this chapter, we show you how to set up a home in Russian, from getting exactly what you want from your real estate agent to decorating your new place. And so you can afford to set up your Russian home just the way you want it, we also tell you how to find and hold a job, all in Russian.

Hunting for an Apartment or a House

Finding an apartment or a house is stressful enough in English. Are you looking for a good view or a central location? What's more important: a big kitchen or hardwood floors? And how squeaky are those hardwood floors? Equip yourself with phrases introduced in the following sections, and good luck in your hunt for a home!

Talking about an apartment



A Russian **kvartira** (kvuhr-*tee*-ruh; apartment) is generally smaller than the apartments you may be used to. For example, **odnokomnatnaya** (uhd-nah-*kohm*-nuht-nuh-ye) **kvartira** literally means one-room apartment. You may be tempted to think of it as a one-bedroom apartment, but watch out! While the

one-bedroom apartment that you're thinking of has a living room and, possibly, a dining room, **odnokomnatnaya kvartira** doesn't. It has, literally, one room, and a kitchen (which is usually used as a dining room, no matter how tiny it is). So, a more accurate equivalent for a Russian **odnokomnatnaya kvartira** is "a studio apartment."



The most common type of an apartment for rent is the **odnokomnatnaya kvartira.** If you like to live large, you may want to look at a **dvukhkomnatnaya kvartira** (dvookh-*kohm*-nuht-nuh-ye kvuhr-*tee*-ruh; two-room apartment) or even a **tryokhkomnatnaya kvartira** (tryokh-*kohm*-nuht-nuh-ye kvuhr-*tee*-ruh; three-room apartment). Some other phrases you use and hear when talking about an apartment are:

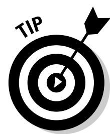
- **snyat' kvartiru** (snyat' kvuhr-*tee*-roo; to rent an apartment)
- **sdat' kvartiru** (zdaht' kvuhr-*tee*-roo; to rent out an apartment)
- **kvartira s myebyel'yu** (kvuhr-*tee*-ruh s *mye*-bee-l'yu; furnished apartment)
- **kvartira na pyervom etazhye** (kvuhr-*tee*-ruh nuh *pyer*-vuhm eh-tuh-*zheh*; a first-floor apartment)
- **kvartira na vtorom etazhye** (kvuhr-*tee*-ruh nuh ftah-*rohm* eh-tuh-*zheh*; a second-floor apartment)



Although Russians do use the word **ryenta** (*ryen*-tuh; rent), it isn't usually used to talk about private apartments. To inquire about the price of an apartment, ask about **oplata za kvartiru** (ahp-*lah*-tuh zuh kvuhr-*tee*-roo; payment for the apartment) or **stoimost' prozhivaniya v myesyats** (*stoh*-ee-muhst' pruh-zhih-*vah*-nee-ye v *mye*-seets; cost of living per month). When you make your payments, use the expression **platit' za kvartiru** (pluh-*teet'* zuh kvuhr-*tee*-roo; pay for the apartment).

In big cities like Moscow and St. Petersburg, you can probably find an apartment on the Internet. In other places, you may have to resort to good old newspaper ads. Look for the section **Ob'yavleniya** (ahb'-eev-*lye*-nee-ye; classified). You have several ways to say "apartments for rent" in Russian. Any of the following is likely to pop up in the newspaper you're looking at:

- **kvartiry v nayom** (kvuhr-*tee*-rih v nuh-*yom*; apartments to rent)
- **aryenda kvartir** (uh-*ryen*-duh kvuhr-*teer*; rent of apartments)
- **sdayu** (sduh-*yu*; *Literally:* I am renting out)
- **snyat' zhil'yo** (snyat' zhihl'-*yo*; *Literally:* to rent a place)



The ads you find are probably saturated with abbreviations such as **kmn** for **komnata** (*kohm*-nuh-tuh; room) and **m.** for **metro,** or **stantsiya myetro** (*stahn*-tsih-ye meet-*roh*; subway station). Because the metro is such a prominent means of getting around, Russians use names of metro stations to describe location. Thus, if the ad says **m. "Tverskaya,"** the apartment is located next to metro station **"Tverskaya" —** downtown Moscow!



In close quarters: Communal living

Although scarce in number, **kommunalki** (kuh-moo-*nahl*-kee; communal apartments) still exist in some Russian cities. **Kommunalki** came into being during the Soviet revolution, when huge and luxurious aristocratic apartments were expropriated by the Soviet government and divided among three to ten poor families. The new aristocracy purchased some of those apartments, which regained their luxurious status, but others are still populated by way too many unrelated people. So, unless you're ready to live in an improvised commune, make sure to ask your real estate agent: **A eto ne kommunalka?** (uh *eh*-tuh nee kuh-moo-*nahl*-kuh; Is this a communal apartment?)

Your ad may also say **nye agenstvo** (nee uh-*gyehn*-stvuh; not an agency). What it means is that the ad was posted by the landlord himself, which allows him to cut the cost of a rental agency fee.

Discussing a house

The rules for finding a house are pretty much the same as those for finding an apartment. You can check out newspaper ads about selling **nyedvizhimost'** (need-*vee*-zhih-muhst'; real estate) or talk to an **agyent po prodazhye nyedvizhimosti** (uh-*gyent* puh prah-*dah*-zhih need-*vee*-zhih-muhs-tee; real estate agent).

If you want to rent a **dom** (dohm; house) in a big city, you're likely to find **dom v prigorodye** (dohm f *pree*-guh-ruh-dee; house in the suburbs). Even if you don't have a car, it's not usually a problem: Russia has a good system of **elyektrichki** (eh-leek-*treech*-kee; suburban trains), which take you virtually anywhere. Find out about transportation options, though, before making your decision.

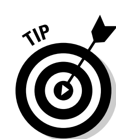
Asking the right questions



Some questions you definitely want to ask your **agyent po s'yomu zhil'ya** (uh-*gyent* pah *s'yo*-moo zhih-*l'ya*; real estate agent) or **khozyain/khozyajka** (khah-*zya*-een/khah-*zyay*-kuh; landlord/landlady):

- **Mnye nuzhno platit' dyeposit?** (mnye *noozh*-nuh plah-*teet'* dee-pah-*zeet*; Do I need to pay the deposit?)
- **Kto platit za uslugi (elyektrichyestvo, gaz, voda)?** [ktoh *plah*-teet zuh oos-*loo*-gee (eh-leek-*tree*-chees-tvuh, gahs, vah-*dah*); Who pays for utilities (electricity, gas, water)?]

- **Kakaya oplata v myesyats?** (kuh-*kah*-ye ahp-*lah*-tuh v *mye*-seets; What are the monthly payments?)
- **Vy khotitye, chtoby ya platil rublyami ili dollarami?** (vih khah-*tee*-tee *shtoh*-bih ya pluh-*teel* roob-*lya*-mee *ee*-lee *doh*-luh-ruh-mee; Do you want me to pay in rubles or in dollars?)
- **Eto spokojnyj rayon?** (*eh*-tuh spah-*kohy*-nihy ruh-*yon*; Is it a safe neighborhood?)
- **Kto zanimayetsya pochinkoj nyeispravnostyej?** (ktoh zuh-nee-*mah*-ee-tsye pah-*cheen*-kuhy nee-ees-*prahv*-nuhs-teey; Who performs the maintenance? *Literally:* Who performs the repairs of things that are out of order?)



Don't rush to exchange your money to pay the rent! Some landlords may prefer that you pay in dollars.



The main things to find out about a house specifically are the following:

- **Eto dom v gorodye ili v prigorodye?** (*eh*-tuh dohm v *goh*-ruh-dee *ee*-lee f *pree*-guh-ruh-dee; Is the house in the city or in the suburbs?)
- **Kakoj vid transporta tuda khodit?** (kuh-*kohy* veet *trahn*-spuhr-tuh too-*dah khoh*-deet; Which public transportation runs there?)
- **Skol'ko v domye etazhyej?** (*skohl'*-kuh v *doh*-mee eh-tuh-*zhehy*; How many floors does the house have?)
- **Kakoye v domye otoplyeniye?** (kuh-*koh*-ee v *doh*-mee uh-tah-*plye*-nee-ee; How is the house heated?)
- **V domye yest' garazh?** (v *doh*-mee yest' guh-*rahsh*; Is there a garage in the house?)

Sealing the deal

When you find a place to rent that strikes your fancy, you're ready to **podpisat' kontrakt** (puhd-pee-*saht'* kahn-*trahkt*; sign the lease). In your **kontrakt na aryendu zhil'ya** (kahn-*trahkt* nuh uh-*ryen*-doo zhihl'-*ya*; lease), look for the following key points:

- **srok** (srohk; duration of the lease)
- **oplata/plata** (ah-*plah*-tuh/*plah*-tuh; rent)
- **podpis'** (*poht*-pees'; signature)

Talkin' the Talk



Josh is looking for an apartment in Moscow. He's at a rental agency, talking to an **agyent** (uh-*gyent*; a real estate agent).

Josh: **Ya khochu snyat' kvartiru. Odnokomnatnuyu, nye ochyen' doroguyu, v tsyentrye.**
ya khah-*choo* snyat' kvuhr-*tee*-roo. uhd-nah-*kohm*-nuht-noo-yu, nee *oh*-cheen' duh-rah-*goo*-yu, f *tsehn*-tree.
I want to rent an apartment. A studio, not too expensive, in the downtown area.

Agyent: **My mozhyem vam pryedlozhit' elitnuyu kvartiru v domye okolo Moskvy-ryeki. Pyatyj etazh, balkon. Vid na Kryeml'**.
mih *moh*-zhihm vahm preed-lah-*zhiht'* eh-*leet*-noo-yu kvuhr-*tee*-roo v *doh*-mee *oh*-kuh-luh mahsk-*vih* ree-*kee*. *pya*-tihy eh-*tahsh*, buhl-*kohn*. veet nuh kryeml'.
We can offer you an elite apartment next to Moscow River. The fifth floor, a balcony. A view of the Kremlin.

Josh: **A kakaya aryendnaya plata?**
ah kuh-*kah*-ye uh-*ryend*-nuh-ye *plah*-tuh?
And what is the rent?

Agyent: **2,000 dollarov v myesyats.**
dvye *tih*-see-chee *doh*-luh-ruhf v *mye*-seets.
$2,000 a month.

Josh: **Nyet, eto slishkom dorogo.**
nyet, *eh*-tuh *sleesh*-kuhm *doh*-ruh-guh.
No, that's too expensive.

Words to Know

v tsyentrye	f tsehn-tree	in the downtown area
My mozhyem vam pryedlozhit'	mih moh-zhihm vahm preed-lah-zhiht'	We can offer you
balkon	buhl-kohn	balcony
vid na	veet nuh	a view of
aryendnaya plata	uh-ryend-nuh-ye plah-tuh	rent
slishkom dorogo	sleesh-kuhm doh-ruh-guh	too expensive

Settling into Your New Digs

Congratulations on moving into your new home! In the following sections, you discover how to talk about your home and the things you have there.

Knowing the names of different rooms

Russians don't usually have as many rooms as Americans do. And the rooms they have are often reversible: a **divan-krovat'** (dee-*vahn* krah-*vaht'*; sofa bed) can turn a cozy **gostinnaya** (gahs-*tee*-nuh-ye; living room) into a **spal'nya** (*spahl'*-nye; bedroom). In the morning, the same room can magically turn into a **stolovaya** (stah-*loh*-vuh-ye; dining room) when the hosts bring in their **sklad-noj stol** (skluhd-*nohy* stohl; folding table)!

Here are some names for rooms to navigate you through a Russian apartment:

- **kukhnya** (*kookh*-nye; kitchen)
- **prikhozhaya** (pree-*khoh*-zhuh-ye; hall)
- **koridor** (kuh-ree-*dohr*; corridor)
- **dyetskaya** (*dyet*-skuh-ye; children's room)
- **kabinyet** (kuh-bee-*nyet*; study)

The English word "bathroom" corresponds to two different notions in Russian: **vannaya** (*vahn*-nuh-ye) and **tualyet** (too-uh-*lyet*). **Vannaya** is the place where **vanna** (*vahn*-nuh; bathtub), **dush** (doosh; shower), and **rakovina** (*rah*-kuh-vee-nuh; sink) are. The **tualyet** is usually a separate room next to the **vannaya.**



One of the most important phrases in any language is this one: **Gdye tualyet?** (gdye too-uh-*lyet*; Where is the bathroom?)



Most Russian room names, such as **gostinnaya** and **stolovaya,** don't decline like nouns. Instead, they decline like feminine adjectives. The explanation to this mystery is easy: **stolovaya** is what remained in modern Russian of **stolovaya komnata** (dining room), where the word **stolovaya** was, in fact, an adjective, describing the feminine noun **komnata** (room). For more info on adjective declension, see Chapter 2.

Buying furniture

The easiest place to find **myebyel'** (*mye*-beel'; furniture) is **myebyel'nij magazin** (*mye*-beel'-nihy muh-guh-*zeen*; furniture store). Here are some Russian words for various pieces of furniture:

- **divan** (dee-*vahn*; sofa)
- **dukhovka** (doo-*khohf*-kuh; oven)
- **kholodil'nik** (khuh-lah-*deel'*-neek; refrigerator)
- **knizhnaya polka** (*kneezh*-nuh-ye *pohl*-kuh; bookshelf)
- **kovyor** (kah-*vyor*; carpet/rug)
- **krovat'** (krah-*vaht*; bed)
- **kryeslo** (*kryes*-luh; armchair)
- **kukhonnyj stol** (*koo*-khuh-nihy stohl; kitchen table)
- **lampa** (*lahm*-puh; lamp)
- **magnitofon** (muhg-nee-tah-*fohn*; stereo)
- **mikrovolnovka** (meek-ruh-vahl-*nohf*-kuh; microwave)
- **pis'myennyj stol** (*pees'*-mee-nihy stohl; desk/writing table)
- **plita** (plee-*tah*; stove)
- **posudomoyechnaya mashina** (pah-*soo*-dah-*moh*-eech-nuh-ye muh-*shih*-nuh; dishwasher)
- **shkaf** (shkahf; cupboard/closet/wardrobe)
- **stiral'naya mashina** (stee-*rahl'*-nuh-ye muh-*shih*-nuh; washing machine)
- **stol** (stohl; table)

- **stul** (stool; chair)
- **sushilka** (soo-*shihl*-kuh; dryer)
- **zhurnal'nyj stolik** (zhoor-*nahl'*-nihy *stoh*-leek; coffee table)
- **zyerkalo** (*zyer*-kuh-luh; mirror)

Talkin' the Talk



Matt is at a furniture store in Moscow. The **prodavets** (pruh-duh-*vyets*; shop assistant) is helping him choose furniture for his new apartment.

Matt: **Izvinitye, pohzalujsta. Gdye tut u vas krovati?**
eez-vee-*nee*-tee, pah-*zhahl*-stuh. gdye toot oo vahs krah-*vah*-tee?
Excuse me, where are the beds?

Prodavets: **Krovati vot zdyes'. Vot otlichnij divan-krovat', on na rasprodazhye, nyedorogo.**
krah-*vah*-tee voht zdyes'. voht aht-*leech*-nihy dee-*vahn* krah-*vaht'*, ohn nuh ruhs-prah-*dah*-zhih, nee-*doh*-ruh-guh.
Beds are over here. Here's a great sofa bed, it's on sale, it's inexpensive.

Matt: **Nyet, spasibo, ya ish'u obyknovyennuyu krovat'.**
nyet, spuh-*see*-buh, ya ee-*sh'oo* uh-bihk-nah-*vye*-noo-yu krah-*vaht'*.
No, thanks, I am looking for a regular bed.

Prodavets: **Odnospal'nuyu ili dvuspal'nuyu?**
ahd-nahs-*pahl'*-noo-yu *ee*-lee dvoo-*spahl'*-noo-yu?
Twin or queen size?

Matt: **Ya yesh'yo nye ryeshil. U myenya v kvartirye nye ochyen' mnogo myesta.**
ya ee-*sh'oh* nee ree-*shihl*. oo mee-*nya* f kvahr-*tee*-ree nee *oh*-cheen' *mnoh*-guh *myes*-tuh.
I haven't decided yet. I don't have that much space in my apartment.

Words to Know

Gdye tut u vas krovati?	gdye toot oo vahs krah-vah-tee	Where are the beds?
na rasprodazhye	nuh ruhs-prah-dah-zhih	on sale
Nyedorogo.	nee-doh-ruh-guh	It's inexpensive.
Ya yesh'yo nye reshil.	ya ee-sh'oh nee ree-shihl	I haven't decided yet.
U myenya v kvartirye nye ochyen' mnogo myesta.	oo mee-nya f kvuhr-tee-ree nee oh-cheen' mnoh-guh myes-tuh	I don't have that much space in my apartment.

Searching for a Job

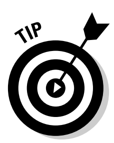
A great Russian proverb, one may claim, summarizes Russians' attitude to work: **Rabota — nye volk, v lyes nye ubyezhit.** (ruh-*boh*-tuh nee vohlk, v lyes nee oo-bee-*zhiht*; Work isn't a wolf, it won't run away from you into the forest.) This proverb represents the same kind of thinking that inspired Mark Twain to give a new meaning to the famous words of wisdom: "Do not put off until tomorrow what can be put off till day after tomorrow just as well." But whatever Russians claim in their proverbs, the professional market in some Russian cities is thriving. In the following sections, you discover all you need to know about finding a job in Russian.

Discovering where to look

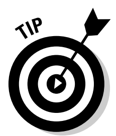
Looking for a job in Russia isn't much different than job-searching elsewhere in the world. Your options are:

- Going to a **kadrovoye agyenstvo** (*kahd*-ruh-vuh-ee uh-*gyens*-tvuh; recruiting agency)
- Posting your **ryezyumye** (ree-zyu-*meh*; resume) on a **sajt po poisku raboty** (sahjt pah *poh*-ees-koo ruh-*boh*-tih; job finder Web site)

- Looking for **ob'yavlyeniye** (uhb-yeev-*lye*-nee-ee; announcement/ad) in a newspaper or a magazine
- Harassing your friends



If you decide to go with option two, `http://www.job-promo.xvx.ru/katalog.htm` can help you. It's a Web site maintained by **Rossijskaya sluzhba zanyatosti** (rah-*seey*-skuh-ye *sloozh*-buh *zah*-nee-tuhs-tee; Russian federal placement service) that offers a thorough online catalog of Web sites devoted to finding a job in Russia.



The most popular newspapers that offer employment information are **"Rabota dlya vas"** (ruh-*boh*-tuh dlya vahs; Jobs for You), **"Rabota i zarplata"** (ruh-*boh*-tuh ee zuhr-*plah*-tuh; Jobs and Wages), and **"Elitnyj pyersonal"** (eh-*leet*-nihy peer-sah-*nahl*; Elite Personnel).

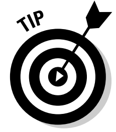
Some phrases to look for when you're scanning the ads:

- **vakansiya** (vuh-*kahn*-see-ye; vacancy)
- **opyt raboty** (*oh*-piht ruh-*boh*-tih; experience in the field)
- **ryekommyendatsii** (ree-kuh-meen-*dah*-tsih-ee; recommendations)
- **zarplata** (zuhr-*plah*-tuh; wage)
- **strakhovka** (struh-*khohf*-kuh; insurance)
- **otpusk** (*oht*-poosk; vacation time)

Contacting employers

When you identify a **rabotodatyel'** (ruh-*boh*-tuh-*dah*-teel'; employer) that you're interested in, you want to **poslat' ryezyumye** (pahs-*laht'* ree-zyu-*meh*; to send a resume). You have several ways to do it; to find out which way is preferred by your employer, you can ask: **Mnye prislat' ryezyumye . . . ?** (mnye pahs-*laht'* ree-zyu-*meh*; Should I send my resume . . . ?)

- **. . . imejlom?** (ee-*mehy*-luhm; by e-mail)
- **. . . faksom?** (*fahk*-suhm; by fax)
- **. . . pochtoj?** (*pohch*-tuhy; by mail)



A Russian resume, unlike an American one, includes your gender, birth date, and **syemyejnoye polozhyeniye** (see-*myey*-nuh-ee puh-lah-*zheh*-nee-ee; marital status). Some employers may even ask you to include your picture!

The next step is **intyerv'yu** (een-tehr-*v'yu*; interview). If you want to bring some supporting documents to the interview, but aren't sure which, you may want to ask **Kakiye dokumyenty mnye prinyesti na intyerv'yu?** (kuh-*kee*-ee

duh-koo-*myen*-tih mnye pree-nees-*tee* nuh een-tehr-*v'yu*; Which documents should I bring to the interview?) The answers can include

- **diplom** (deep-*lohm*; diploma)
- **razryeshyeniye na rabotu** (ruhz-ree-*sheh*-nee-ee nuh ruh-*boh*-too; work authorization)
- **ryekommyendatsiya** (ree-kuh-meen-*dah*-tsih-ye; reference)

Clarifying job responsibilities

To find out about your **obyazannosti** (ah-*bya*-zuh-nuhs-tee; job responsibilities), you need to ask questions. A good place to start is **Chto vkhodit v moi obyazannosti?** (shtoh *f khoh*-deet v mah-*ee* ah-*bya*-zuh-nuhs-tee; What do my job responsibilities include?) The variety of professional skills is endless, but these words are likely to be useful:

- **pyechatat'** (pee-*chah*-tuht'; to type)
- **rabotat' s komp'yutyerom** (ruh-*boh*-tuht' s kahm-*p'yoo*-teh-ruhm; to work with a computer)
- **pyeryevodit'** (pee-ree-vah-*deet'*; to translate)

Talkin' the Talk



Ann just finished an interview at a high school in Vladimir, where she applied for a teaching position. The **diryektor** (dee-*ryek*-tuhr; principal) is congratulating Ann and explaining her job responsibilities.

Diryektor: **Pozdravlyayu vas! Vy nam podkhoditye.**
puhz-druhv-*lya*-yu vahs! vih nahm paht-*khoh*-dee-tee.
Congratulations! You will be a good fit.

Ann: **Spasibo. U myenya yest' vopros. Skol'ko urokov ya budu pryepodavat'?**
spuh-*see*-buh. oo mee-*nya* yest' vahp-*rohs*. *skohl'*-kuh oo-*roh*-kuhf ya *boo*-doo pree-puh-duh-*vaht'*?
Thank you. I have a question. How many classes will I teach?

Diryektor: **Tri uroka kazhdyj dyen'.**
tree oo-*roh*-kuh *kahzh*-dihy dyen'.
Three classes every day.

Ann:	**Kogda ya mogu nachat'?** kahg-*dah* ya mah-*goo* nuh-*chaht'*? When can I start?
Diryektor:	**Vy mozhyetye nachat' zavtra. Zarplata — tri tysyachi rublyej v myesyats.** vih *moh*-zhih-tee nuh-*chaht' zahf*-truh. zuhr-*plah*-tuh tree *tih*-see-chee roob-*lyey* v *mye*-seets. You can start tomorrow. Your wage is 3,000 a month.

Words to Know

Vy nam podkhoditye.	vih nahm paht-khoh-dee-tee	You will be a good fit.
U myenya yest' vopros.	oo mee-nya yest' vahp-rohs	I have a question.
kazhdyj dyen'	kahzh-dihy dyen'	every day
Kogda ya mogu nachat'?	Kahg-dah ya mah-goo nuh-chaht	When can I start?
Vy mozhyetye nachat' zavtra.	vih moh-zhih-tee nuh-chaht' zahf-truh	You can start tomorrow.

Succeeding in the Workplace

When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Or, as the Russians say, **V chuzhoj monastyr' so svoim ustavom nye khodyat.** (f choo-*zhohy* muh-nuh-*stihr'* suh svah-*eem* oos-*tah*-vuhm nee *khoh*-dyet; Don't go to someone else's monastery with your own regulations.) The workplace may be pretty different when you're working in a foreign country, or even at home for a foreign company. The following sections equip you with the necessary phrases to thrive in a Russian workspace.

Making your way around the office

It's one thing to make it into an office, and quite another to survive there. All those special rooms and gadgets can make anyone go dizzy, even if you don't

need to refer to them in a foreign language. In the following sections, we tell you how to navigate your way around the office with maximum ease.

Surveying supplies

When you're **v ofisye** (v *oh*-fees-ee; at the office), English speakers definitely have a huge advantage: Out of the zillion little things inhabiting the office, a good portion have highly recognizable English-borrowed names. Even if you knew no Russian whatsoever, wouldn't you suspect something if you heard the phrase: **Mnye nuzhyen kartridzh dlya printyera** (mnye *noo*-zheen *kahr*-treedzh dlya *preen*-tee-ruh; I need a cartridge for my printer)? Here's a list of common office supplies to know:

- **komp'yutyer** (kahm-*p'yu*-tehr; computer)
- **noutbuk** (nuh-oot-*book*; laptop)
- **fax** (fahks; fax)
- **ksyeroks** (*ksye*-ruhks; copy machine)
- **skanyer** (*skah*-nehr; scanner)
- **modyem** (mah-*dehm*; modem)
- **monitor** (muh-nee-*tohr*; monitor)
- **tyelyefon** (tee-lee-*fohn*; telephone)
- **ruchka** (*rooch*-kuh; pen)
- **karandash** (kuh-ruhn-*dahsh*; pencil)
- **styorka** (*styor*-kuh; eraser)
- **tyetrad'** (teet-*raht'*; notebook)
- **papka** (*pahp*-kuh; file)
- **bumaga** (boo-*mah*-guh; paper)
- **zamazka** (zuh-*mahs*-kuh; liquid corrector)
- **skryepki** (*skryep*-kee; paper clips)
- **klyejkaya lyenta** (*klyey*-kuh-ye *lyen*-tuh; tape)
- **styeplyer** (*stehp*-leer; stapler)

Check out Chapter 9 for general information on making phone calls and sending faxes and e-mails.

Navigating rooms

You may want to know the names for other important work functions, such as **stolovaya** (stah-*loh*-vuh-ye; cafeteria), **komnata otdykha** (*kohm*-nuh-tuh *oht*-dih-khuh; lounge), and **kurilka** (koo-*reel*-kuh), a room designated for smoking, where you see the most of your colleagues.

Financial matters can be settled in the **buhkgaltyeriya** (boo-guhl-*tye*-ree-ye; accounts office). The room you want to avoid is the **kabinyet nachal'nika** (kuh-bee-*nyet* nuh-*chahl'*-nee-kuh; boss's office).

Your actual work is usually done in a **kabinyet** (kuh-bee-*nyet*; office room) and a **konfyeryentszal** (kuhn-fee-*ryents*-zahl; meeting room).

Communicating in the workplace

The thing about the workplace is that you're never alone. You often need to talk to a **kollyega** (kah-*lye*-guh; coworker), your **nachal'nik** (nuh-*chahl'*-neek; boss), and a **kliyent** (klee-*yent*; client). In the following sections, find out what to say in the workplace and how to say it in Russian.

Making an appointment

Here are the standard phrases used to **naznachit' vstryechu** (nuh-*znah*-cheet' *fstrye*-choo; make an appointment):

- **Davajtye vstryetimsya v dyevyat' chasov utra.** (duh-*vahy*-tee *fstrye*-teem-sye v *dye*-veet' chuh-*sohf* oo-*trah*; Let's meet at 9 a.m.)
- **Ya budu vas zhdat' v tri chasa dnya.** (ya *boo*-doo vahs zhdaht' f tree chuh-*sah* dnya; I'll be waiting for you at 3 p.m.)

If you're arranging for a phone call, you can say:

- **Ya budu zhdat' vashyego zvonka v dyesyat' chasov utra.** (ya *boo*-doo zhdaht' *vah*-shih-vuh zvahn-*kah* v *dye*-seet' chuh-*sohf* oo-*trah*; I'll be waiting for your phone call at 10 a.m.)
- **Ya vam pozvonyu v dva chasa dnya.** (ya vahm puh-zvah-*nyu* v dvah chuh-*sah* dnya; I'll call you at 2 p.m.)

For details on telling time, see Chapter 7.

Sticking to workplace etiquette

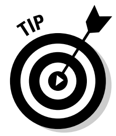
Russian business etiquette is not as strict as that of some other cultures. Just garnish your speech generously with **pozhalujsta** (pah-*zhahl*-stuh; please) and **spasibo** (spuh-*see*-buh; thank you), and you'll already sound more formal than an average Russian in the workplace.



The main thing you notice about Russian **dyelovoj etikyet** (dee-lah-*vohy* eh-tee-*kyet*; workplace etiquette) is that it's less formal than what you may be used to. Engaging in humorous exchanges that fall far from political correctness is considered normal, and your coworkers are likely to throw plenty of improvised parties at the office. Bosses and clients, however, are excluded from these friendly interactions unless they decide to set the playful tone themselves.



Always use the formal **vy** (vih; you; formal singular and plural) whenever you communicate with anyone in the workplace. If your coworkers and, especially, your boss, want to switch to less formal terms, they'll tell you so. Wait for the initiative to come from them.



To avoid uncomfortable situations, always use the first name plus patronymic form to address your colleagues. If they want you to switch to the Western first-name manner, they'll tell you: **Myenya mozhno zvat' prosto Sasha.** (mee-*nya mohzh*-nuh zvaht' *proh*-stuh *sah*-shuh; You can call me simply Sasha.) For more information on Russian names, see Chapter 3.

Here are some general polite phrases to use in the workplace:

- **Ya mogu vam chyem-nibud' pomoch'?** (ya mah-*goo* vahm *chehm*-nee-boot' pah-*mohch*; Can I help you with anything?)
- **Bol'shoye spasibo, vy mnye ochyen' pomogli.** (bahl'-*shoh*-ee spuh-*see*-buh vih mnye *oh*-cheen' puh-mahg-*lee*; Thank you very much, you helped me a lot.)



Match the rooms from the list on the left with the most appropriate furniture from the list on the right. See Appendix C for the answers.

1. **Stolovaya**	a. **Krovat'**
2. **Spal'nya**	b. **Kryeslo**
3. **Gostinnaya**	c. **Stol**

In which of the following sections of the Classified ads do you NOT find information about apartments for rent? Check out Appendix C for the answer.

1. **Sdayu**
2. **Aryenda kvartir**
3. **Rabota**
4. **Kvartiry v nayom**
5. **Snyat' zhil'yo**

Part III
Russian on the Go



"Honey, please! Be patient! How's anyone going to know what's wrong unless I find the Russian word for 'alligator'?"

In this part . . .

If you're the kind of person who's constantly on the go, then Part III is for you. In this part, you find the phrases you need for booking and taking trips; getting around the city and the world on planes, trains, and more; and making the most of your hotel experience. You also discover how to talk about money, how to ask for directions, and the best way to handle emergencies in Russian. By the time you're done with Part III, you're armed with all the Russian you need to travel nearly anywhere on Earth, and maybe even a little further!

Chapter 11

Planning a Trip

In This Chapter

- Deciding on dates
- Selecting a destination
- Working with a travel agency
- Getting your passport and visa
- Knowing what to pack

Do you like to **putyeshyestvovat'** (poo-tee-*shehs*-tvuh-vuht'; to travel)? If so, then this chapter is for you! In this chapter, you discover how to express when and where you want to travel, how to speak to a travel agent, and how to secure a passport and a visa. We also provide you with some useful phrases and give you packing tips for a **putyeshyestviye** (poo-tee-*shehs*-tvee-ee; trip) to Russia. And now, as Russians often say: **Poyekhali!** (pah-*ye*-khuh-lee; Let's go!/start!/move!)

When Can We Go? Choosing the Date for Your Trip

The excitement of travel sets in the minute you begin to think about it. The first thing we always do when planning a trip is decide on the dates when we want to leave and come back. In the following sections, you find out the names of months and seasons, and we show you how to state the year and specific dates for travel. (See Chapter 7 for details about times of the day and the days of the week.)

Recognizing the names of the months



To help you to decide when to take a trip, here's a list of the **myesyatsy** (*mye*-see-tsih; months). Note that each **myesyats** (*mye*-seets; month) in Russian has a name that sounds very similar to its English counterpart.

- **yanvar'**(een-*vahr'*; January)
- **fyevral'** (feev-*rahl'*; February)
- **mart** (mahrt; March)
- **apryel'**(uhp-*ryel'*; April)
- **maj** (mahy; May)
- **iyun'**(ee-*yun'*; June)
- **iyul'** (ee-*yul'*; July)
- **avgust** (*ahv*-goost; August)
- **syentyabr'** (seen-*tyabr'*; September)
- **oktyabr'** (ahk-*tyabr'*; October)
- **noyabr'** (nah-*yabr'*; November)
- **dyekabr'** (dee-*kahbr'*; December)



Note that while English capitalizes the first letter of the name of the month, Russian does not.

Say you're considering taking a trip in November or August but aren't yet sure about the date. If that's the case, you indicate the month of the trip with the phrase **v** (v; in) plus the name of the month in the prepositional case, as in **v noyabrye** (v nuh-eeb-*rye*; in November) or **v avgustye** (v *ahv*-goos-tee; in August). See Chapter 2 for details about cases.



Note that the word for November changes its original accent in the prepositional case. This change (called a "stress shift") affects all months ending on **-abr'/-yabr'.**

Talking about specific dates



When you want to say a **chislo** (chees-*loh*; date) in Russian, you need to put the ordinal number indicating the day in the form of neuter gender and the name of the month in the genitive case, as in:

- **Syegodnya pyatoye oktyabrya** (see-*vohd*-nye *pya*-tuh-ee uhk-teeb-*rya*; Today is October 5).
- **Zavtra dyesyatoye iyulya** (*zahf*-truh dee-*sya*-tuh-ee ee-*yu*-lye; Tomorrow is June 10).
- **Poslyezavtra dvadtstat' chyetvyortoye marta** (*pohs*-lee-*zahf*-truh *dvaht*-tsuht' cheet-*vyor*-tuh-ee *mahr*-tuh; The day after tomorrow is March 24).



To state that a certain event occurred, occurs, or will occur on a certain date, you (again!) have to change the case of the ordinal number indicating the day of the month. This time, the ordinal number takes the genitive case. So when making a flight reservation, you say:

> **Ya khochu vylyetyet' pyervogo syentyabrya i vyernut'sya pyatogo oktyabrya.** (ya khah-*choo vih*-lee-teet' *pyer*-vuh-vuh seen-teeb-*rya* ee veer-*noot'*-sye *pya*-tuh-vuh uhk-teeb-*rya*; I want to leave on September 1 and come back on October 5.)

If somebody asks you **Kogda vy uyezzhayetye?** (kahg-*dah* vih oo-eez-*zhah*-ee-tee; When are you leaving?) and you don't mind sharing that information, you may say **Ya uyezzhayu pyatnadtsatogo marta** (ya oo-eez-*zhah*-yu peet-*naht*-tsuh-tuh-vuh *mahr*-tuh; I'm leaving March 15). If you want the person to meet you at the airport or railway station, you may add **I vozvrash'yayus' chyetvy-ortogo apryelya** (ee vuhz-vruh-s*h'yah*-yus' cheet-*vyor*-tuh-vuh uhp-*rye*-lye; And I'm coming back on April 4).

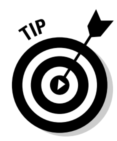
For more info on ordinal numbers and the genitive case, see Chapter 2.

Saying the year



To indicate a year, you begin with the century, as in **tysyacha dyevyatsot** (*tih*-see-chuh dee-veet-*soht*; nineteen, *Literally:* one thousand nine hundred) for the 20th century or **dvye tysyachi** (dvye *tih*-see-chee; two thousand) for the 21st century. Then, to state the number indicating the year, use the corresponding ordinal number, as in:

- **tysyacha dyevyatsot pyat'dyesyat' vos'moj god** (*tih*-see-chuh dee-veet-*soht* pee-dee-*syat* vahs'-*mohy* goht; 1958, *Literally:* One thousand nine hundred fifty-eighth year)
- **dvye tysyachi syed'moj god** (dvye *tih*-see-chee seed'-*mohy* goht; 2007, *Literally:* Two thousand seventh year)



Note that in indicating a year, Russian, unlike English (with its reputation of being an economical language), actually uses the word **god** (goht; year). The word **god** has two plural forms: the regular **gody** (*goh*-dih; years) and the irregular **goda** (gah-*dah*; years). A very subtle stylistic difference exists between the two, so don't hesitate to use both or the one you like better.

Have you ever experienced what's often referred to as a memory block when you just don't remember what year it is now? The question to ask in this situation is **Kakoj syejchas god?** (kuh-*kohy* see-*chahs* goht; What year is it now?) If you're convinced that the current year is 2006, for example, you would say **Syejchas dvye tysyachi shyestoj god** (see-*chahs* dvye *tih*-see-chee shees-*tohy* goht; It is 2006).

More often, we use years to indicate when a certain event took, takes, or will take place. To make this statement, use preposition **v** + the year in the prepositional case + **godu** (gah-*doo*; year), as in:

- **v tysyacha dyevyatsot pyat'dyesyat vos'mom godu** (v *tih*-see-chuh dee-veet-*soht* pee-dee-*syat* vahs'-*mohm* gah-*doo*; in 1958, *Literally:* in the one thousand nine hundred fifty-eighth year)
- **v dvye tysyachi syed'mom godu** (v dvye *tih*-see-chee seed'-*mohm* gah-*doo*; in 2007, *Literally:* in the two thousand seventh year)
- **v dvye tysyachi sorok vos'mom godu** (v dvye *tih*-see-chee *soh*-ruhk vahs'-*mohm* gah-*doo*; in 2048, *Literally:* in the two thousand forty-eighth year)



To indicate the year in which an event takes place, you only have to put the last ordinal numeral describing the year into the prepositional case. For more info on ordinal numerals and forming the prepositional case, see Chapter 2.

Surveying the seasons



Although some places in the world just don't have **vryemyena goda** (vree-mee-*nah goh*-duh; seasons, *Literally:* times of the year) — take, for example, Florida or California — it's still a good idea to know how to say them in Russian. Here they are:

- **zima** (zee-*mah*; winter)
- **vyesna** (vees-*nah*; spring)
- **lyeto** (*lye*-tuh; summer)
- **osyen'** (*oh*-seen'; fall)



A popular Russian song says **V prirodye plokhoj pogodye nye byvayet** (v pree-*roh*-dee plah-*khohy* pah-*goh*-dee nee bih-*vah*-eet; Nature doesn't have bad weather). This line is another way of saying that every **vryemya goda** (*vrye*-mye *goh*-duh; season, *Literally:* time of the year) has its own beauty.

Where Do You Want to Go? Picking a Place for Your Trip

Have you ever asked yourself **Kuda ty khochyesh' poyekhat'?** (koo-*dah* tih *khoh*-cheesh' pah-*ye*-khuht'; Where do you want to go?) or **Kuda ya khochu poyekhat'?** (koo-*dah* ya khah-*choo* pah-*ye*-khuht'; Where do I want to go?) In the following sections, you find out how to talk about different countries in Russian.

Checking out different countries

We assume that your travel plans are going to take you to one of the seven **kontinyenty** (kuhn-tee-*nyen*-tih; continents) in the following list. You may want to know the name of each **kontinyent** (kuhn-tee-*nyent*; continent) in Russian.

- **Yevropa** (eev-*roh*-puh; Europe)
- **Syevyernaya Amyerika** (*sye*-veer-nuh-ye uh-*mye*-ree-kuh; North America)
- **Yuzhnaya Amerika** (*yuzh*-nuh-ye uh-*mye*-ree-kuh; South America)
- **Afrika** (*ahf*-ree-kuh; Africa)
- **Aziya** (*ah*-zee-ye; Asia)
- **Avstraliya** (uhf-*strah*-lee-ye; Australia)
- **Antarktika** (uhn-*tahrk*-tee-kuh; Antarctica)

Because **Antarktika** isn't a very popular destination, we list here only the **strany** (*strah*-nih; countries) most often visited by foreigners on other continents, beginning with Europe and ending with Asia. (Australia is its own continent, and you can find it in the previous list.) Do you see a **strana** (struh-*nah*; country) that you want to visit?

- **Avstriya** (*ahf*-stree-ye; Austria)
- **Angliya** (*ahn*-glee-ye; England)
- **Frantsiya** (*frahn*-tsih-ye; France)
- **Gyermaniya** (geer-*mah*-nee-ye; Germany)
- **Gollandiya** (guh-*lahnd*-dee-ye; Holland)
- **Italiya** (ee-*tah*-lee-ye; Italy)
- **Ispaniya** (ees-*pah*-nee-ye; Spain)
- **Amyerika** (uh-*mye*-ree-kuh; the United States)
- **Kanada** (kuh-*nah*-duh; Canada)
- **Myeksika** (*myek*-see-kuh; Mexico)
- **Argyentina** (uhr-geen-*tee*-nuh; Argentina)
- **Braziliya** (bruh-*zee*-lee-ye; Brazil)
- **Yegipyet** (ee-*gee*-peet; Egypt)
- **Izrail'**(eez-*rah*-eel', Israel)
- **Morokko** (muh-*rohk*-kuh; Morocco)
- **Turtsiya** (*toor*-tsih-ye; Turkey)
- **Kitaj** (kee-*tahy*; China)

- **Indiya** (*een*-dee-ye; India)
- **Yaponiya** (ee-*poh*-nee-ye; Japan)
- **Novaya Zyelandiya** (*noh*-vuh-ye zee-*lahn*-dee-ye; New Zealand)

Visiting Russia

If you're reading this book, you may be considering a trip to **Rossiya** (rah-*see*-ye; Russia). Great idea! You won't regret it. Where would you like to go first? We recommend that you begin with **Moskva** (mahs-*kvah*; Moscow), Russia's bustling **stolitsa** (stah-*lee*-tsuh; capital), and **Sankt-Pyetyerburg** (sahnkt-pee-teer-*boork*; St. Petersburg).



You'll find quite a few things to see in Moscow, including the following:

- **Kryeml'** (kryeml'; Kremlin, the old town and the seat of the Russian government)
- **Krasnaya plosh'ad'** (*krahs*-nuh-ye *ploh*-sh'uht'; Red Square)
- **Tryetyakovskaya galyeryeya** (tree-tee-*kohf*-skuh-ye guh-lee-*rye*-ye; Tretyakoff art gallery)
- **Pushkinskij muzyej** (*poosh*-keen-skeey moo-*zyey*; Pushkin art museum)
- **Kolomyenskoye** (kah-*loh*-meen-skuh-ee; the former tsars' estate)
- **Novodyevich'ye kladbish'ye** (*noh*-vah-*dye*-veech-ee *klahd*-bee-sh'ee; Novodevich'ye cemetery, the burial place of many famous Russian people)

And if you have a particular interest in staring at dead bodies, then go to **Mavzolyej** (muhv-zah-*lyey*; mausoleum). Vladimir Lenin's mummy is still there for display.



If you like Russian history, literature, and culture, then **Sankt-Pyetyerburg** is a must. Our advice: Visit St. Petersburg at the end of May and beginning of June, during the **byelyye nochi** (*bye*-lih-ee *noh*-chee; white nights). That's what Russians call the short period in early summer when it almost never gets dark in the north. **Pyetyerburg** is the city where, as **pyetyerburzhtsy** (pee-teer-*boorzh*-tsih; people born and living in St. Petersburg) say, **Kazhdyj dom muzyej** (*kahzh*-dihy dohm moo-*zyey*; Every building is a museum).

Here's a list of a few of the places we recommend you see in **Sankt-Pyetyerburg:**

- **Ermitazh** (ehr-mee-*tahsh*; the Hermitage museum)
- **Russkij muzyej** (*roos*-keey moo-*zyey*; Russian Museum)

- **Pushkin** (*poosh*-keen; the town of Pushkin) or **Tsarskoye Syelo** (*tsahr*-skuh-ee see-*loh*; the tsars' village, the former summer residence of the Russian tsars)
- **Pavlovsk** (*pahv*-luhvsk; another former residence of the Russian tsars)
- **Pyetrodvoryets** (*pyet*-truh- dvah-*ryets*; Russian Versailles founded by Peter the Great)
- **Pyetropavlovskaya kryepost'** (*peet*-rah-*pahv*-luhv-skuh-ye *krye*-puhst'; Peter and Paul's Fortress, the burial place of the Russian tsars and former political prison)
- **Isaakiyevskij sobor** (ee-suh-*ah*-kee-eef-skeey sah-*bohr*; St. Isaak's Cathedral, the world's third largest one-cupola cathedral)
- **Piskaryovskoye kladbish'ye** (pees-kuh-*ryof*-skuh-ee *klahd*-bee-sh'ee; Piskarev memorial cemetery, museum of Leningrad 900-day siege)



For those of you with a more adventurous nature, you may want to go to the Asiatic part of Russia, which is the part of Russia lying beyond **Ural'skiye Gory** (oo-*rahl'*-skee-ee *goh*-rih; Ural Mountains). How about going to **Sibir'** (see-*beer'*; Siberia)? **Sibir'** is a beautiful region, and it's not always cold there. In fact, the summers are quite hot.

How Do We Get There? Booking a Trip with a Travel Agency

After you decide where you want to go, you need to call the **byuro putyeshyestvij** (byu-*roh* poo-tee-*shehs*-tveey; travel agency) and talk to an **agyent** (uh-*gyent*; travel agent). If you're planning a trip to Russia, you may want to say the following:

- **Ya khotyel by poyekhat' v Rossiyu v maye** (ya khah-*tyel* bih pah-*ye*-khuht' v rah-*see*-yu v *mah*-ee; I would like to go to Russia in May) if you're a man
- **Ya khotyela by poyekhat' v Rossiyu v maye** (ya khah-*tye*-luh bih pah-*ye*-khuht' v rah-*see*-yu v *mah*-ee; I would like to go to Russia in May) if you're a woman.

And be sure to add: **Chto vy mozhyetye pryedlozhit'?** (shtoh vih *moh*-zhih-tee preed-lah-*zhiht'*; What can you offer? or What do you have available?)

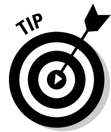
In response, you most likely hear:

> **A kuda imyenno vy khotitye poyekhat'?** (uh koo-*dah* ee-*mee*-nuh vih khah-*tee*-tee pah-*ye*-khuht'; And where exactly would you like to travel?)

To answer this question, use the expression: **Ya khotyel/khotyela by poyekhat' v** (ya khah-*tyel*/khah-*tye*-luh bih pah-*ye*-khuht v; I'd like to go to) + the name of the city you want to see in accusative case, as in:

- **Ya khotyel by poyekhat' v Moskvu i v Pyetyerburg** (ya khah-*tyel* bih pah-*ye*-khuht' v mahs-*kvoo* ee v pee-teer-*boork*; I would like to go to Moscow and St. Petersburg) if you're a man
- **Ya khotyela by poyekhat' v Moskvu i v Pyetyerburg** (ya khah-*tye*-luh bih pah-*ye*-khuht' v mahs-*kvoo* ee v pee-teer-*boork*; I would like to go to Moscow and St. Petersburg) if you're a woman

Now listen carefully as the travel agent lists available **pakyety i tury** (puh-*kye*-tih ee *too*-rih; packages and tours). If anything sounds appealing to you, your next question may be about the cost and what the package includes: **Chto eto vklyuchayet?** (shtoh *eh*-tuh fklyu-*chah*-eet; What does it include?)



With the best deal, the cost includes the following:

- **rassyelyeniye v gostinitsye** (ruhs-see-*lye*-nee-ee v gahs-*tee*-nee-tsih; hotel accommodation)
- **gostinitsa pyervogo/vtorogo/tryet'yego klassa** (gahs-*tee*-neet-tsuh *pyer*-vuh-vuh/ftah-*roh*-vuh/*tryet'*-ee-vuh *klah*-suh; one/two/three star hotel)
- **tryohk/dvukh razovoye pitaniye** (*tryokh*/*dvookh rah*-zuh-vuh-ee pee-*tah*-nee-ee; three/two meals a day)
- **zavtrak** (*zahf*-truhk; bed and breakfast accommodation)
- **ekskursya po gorodu** (ehks-*koor*-see-ye puh *goh*-ruh-doo; city tour)
- **poyezdki v** (pah-*yest*-kee v; trips to) + the destination in the accusative case
- **posyesh'yeniye muzyeyev** (pah-see-*sh'ye*-nee-ee moo-*zye*-eef; museum admission)
- **samolyot, tuda i obratno** (suh-mah-*lyot* too-*dah* ee ahb-*raht*-nuh; round-trip flight)
- **posyesh'yeniye opyery/balyeta/tsirka** (pah-see-*sh'ye*-nee-ee *oh*-pee-rih/buh-*lye*-tuh/*tsihr*-kuh; tickets to the opera/ballet/circus)

And you certainly should receive information on the number of days and nights that the cost includes. For example:

- **tri dnya, tri nochi** (tree dnya, tree *noh*-chee; three days, three nights)
- **syem' dnyej, shyest' nochyej** (syem' dnyey, shehst' nah-*chyey*; seven days, six nights)

See Chapter 2 for more about using numbers followed by nouns.

Don't Leave Home without Them: Dealing with Passports and Visas

If you're planning to go to Russia, then read this section carefully! Here you find out about the all-important documents without which you aren't allowed into (or out of!) Russia: a **pasport** (*pahs*-puhrt; passport) and a **viza** (*vee*-zuh; visa).



If you're an American citizen who has already been abroad, then you know that to travel to other countries, you need a U.S. passport. For some countries, though, this document isn't enough. To go to Russia, you also need a visa that states that the authorities of the **Rossijskaya Fyedyeratsiya** (rah-*seey*-skuh-ye fee-dee-*rah*-tsih-ye; Russian Federation) allow you to cross the Russian border and return home within the time period indicated on the visa. In other words, if you decide to arrive in Russia a day before the date indicated on your visa, the law-abiding customs officer in the Russian airport has the legal right not to let you enter the country. Likewise, if your visa states that you have to leave Russia on January 24, 2006, don't even think of leaving on February 1. You may have to pay a fine and spend a lot more time at the airport than you expected and even miss your flight while explaining to the officials why you stayed in Russia longer than your visa states.

Your passport



If you're planning to go to Russia, you need a passport. If this trip isn't your first **poyezdka za granitsu** (pah-*yezt*-kuh zuh gruh-*nee*-tsoo; trip abroad), make sure to have your passport updated. Without a valid passport, Russian authorities won't let you into the country. Period.

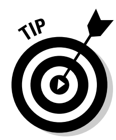
Your visa

Kak dostat' vizu? (kahk dahs-*taht vee*-zoo; How to get a visa?) is the million-dollar question for anybody wanting to travel to Russia. You have three options, depending on which of these circumstances best describes your situation:

- Your travel agent arranges the trip for you, and you're officially a **turist** (too-*reest*; tourist) who stays in a hotel.
- You're going to Russia **v komandirovku** (f kuh-muhn-dee-*rohf*-koo; on business) and have an **ofitsial'noye priglashyeniye** (uh-fee-tsih-*ahl'*-nuh-ee pree-gluh-*sheh*-nee-ee; official invitation) from an organization in Russia approved by the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- You have friends or relatives in Russia who are officially inviting you. These people should be extremely devoted to you and willing to state that you'll be staying with them at all times before you leave, and that they agree to feed you while you're there.



Which of the three situations gives you the easiest chance to get a visa? Certainly the first one. All you have to do is call your travel agency, and they take care of it for you. If, however, you decide on the second or third options, be sure that before going to the **Rossijskoye posol'stvo** (rah-*seey*-skuh-ee pah-*sohl'*-stvuh; the Russian Embassy) or **Konsul'stvo** (*kohn*-sool'-stvuh; Consulate), you have a stamped official letter from Russia containing the pertinent information, which we describe with the second and third options.



Here's the list of documents you need in order to **podat' zayavlyeniye na vizu** (pah-*daht'* zuh-yav-*lye*-nee-ee nuh *vee*-zoo; to apply for a visa):

- **pasport** (*pahs*-puhrt; passport)
- **dvye fotografii** (dvye fuh-tah-*grah*-fee-ee; two photos)
- **dyenyezhnyj ordyer na 150 ili 200 dollarov** (*dye*-neezh-nihy *ohr*-deer nuh stoh pee-dee-*syat ee*-lee *dvyes*-tee *doh*-luh-ruhf; money order for $150 or $200)
- **zayavlyenie na vizu** (zuh-yav-*lye*-nee-ee nuh *vee*-zoo; visa application)
- **ofitsial'noye priglashyeniye** (uh-fee-tsih-*ahl'*-nuh-ee pree-gluh-*sheh*-nee-ee; official invitation)



The mistake most people make is offering a check or a credit card in place of a money order. Please know that the employees of the Russian Embassy won't accept them, no matter how much you plead. And a final word of caution: Before you decide to apply for a visa, check with the Russian Embassy Web site at `www.russianembassy.org`. Regulations constantly change!

Talkin' the Talk



Jack is going to Russia on a business trip. He goes to the Russian Consulate in San Francisco to apply for a visa. Here is his conversation with the **rabotnik konsul'stva** (ruh-*boht*-neek *kohn*-sool'-stvuh; consulate employee) in the visa department.

Jack: **Ya yedu v Moskvu v komandirovku. Mnye nuzhna viza. Vot dokumyenty.**
ya *ye*-doo v mahs-*kvoo* f kuh-muhn-dee-*rohf*-koo. mnye noozh-*nah* *vee*-zuh. voht duh-koo-*myen*-tih.
I am going for a business trip to Moscow. I need a visa. Here are my documents.

Rabotnik konsul'stva: **Tak, pasport, priglashyeniye, zayavlyeniye, I fotografii. A gdye dyenyezhnyj ordyer?**
tahk, *pahs*-puhrt, pree-gluh-*sheh*-nee-ee, zuh-eev-*lye*-nee-ee, ee fuh-tah-*grah*-fee-ee. tahk uh gdye *dye*-neezh-nihy *ohr*-deer?
Okay, this is the passport, invitation, application, and pictures. And where is the money order?

Jack: **Dyenyezhnyj ordyer? Vot chyek na 150 dollarov.**
dye-neezh-nihy *ohr*-deer? voht chyek nuh stoh pee-dee-*syat* *doh*-luh-ruhf.
Money order? Here is a check for $150.

Rabotnik konsul'stva: **My nye prinimayem chyeki. My prinimayem tol'ko dyenyezhnyj ordyer.**
mih nee pree-nee-*mah*-eem *chye*-kee. mih pree-nee-*mah*-eem *tohl'*-kuh *dye*-neezh-nihy *ohr*-deer.
We do not accept checks. We accept only money orders.

Jack: **Nu, ladno. Pridyotsya pridti yesh'yo raz.**
noo, *lahd*-nuh. pree-*dyot*-sye preet-*tee* ee-*sh'yo* rahs.
Oh, well. I will have to come again.

Words to Know

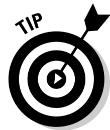
v komandirovku	f kuh-muhn-dee-rohf-koo	(to go) on a business trip
Mnye nuzhna viza.	mnye noozh-nah vee-zuh	I need a visa.
Vot dokumyenty.	voht duh-koo-myen-tih	Here are my documents.
chyek na 150 dollarov	chyek nuh stoh pee-dee-syat doh-luh-ruhf	check for $150
My nye prinimayem	mih nee pree-nee-mah-eem	We do not accept
tol'ko	tohl'-kuh	only
Pridyotsya pridti yesh'yo raz.	pree-dyot-sye preet-tee ee-sh'yo rahs	(I) will have to come again.

Take It with You: Packing Tips

When your trip is quickly approaching, it's time to start packing. No matter when and where you travel, you most likely take the following with you:

- **chyemodan** (chee-mah-*dahn*; suitcase)
- **sumka** (*soom*-kuh; bag)
- **ryukzak** (ryuk-*zahk*; backpack)
- **karta** (*kahr*-tuh; map)
- **fotooapparat** (fuh-tuh-uh-puh-*raht*; camera)
- **plyonka** (*plyon*-kuh; film)
- **vidyeo kamyera** (*vee*-dee-uh *kah*-mee-ruh; video camera)
- **mylo** (*mih*-luh; soap)
- **shampun'** (shuhm-*poon'*; shampoo)
- **dyeodorant** (deh-uh-dah-*rahnt*; deodorant)

- **zubnaya sh'yotka** (zoob-*nah*-ye s*h'yot*-kuh; toothbrush)
- **zubnaya pasta** (zoob-*nah*-ye *pahs*-tuh; toothpaste)
- **kosmyetika** (kahs-*mye*-tee-kuh; makeup)



If you're going to Russia during the winter months, be prepared! Here are items of clothing you want to take with you to keep warm:

- **shapka** (*shahp*-kuh; hat)
- **pal'to** (puhl'-*toh*; heavy coat or overcoat)
- **sharf** (shahrf; scarf)
- **pyerchatki** (peer-*chaht*-kee; gloves)
- **svityer** (*svee*-tehr; sweater)
- **sapogi** (suh-pah-*gee*; boots)

Chapter 6 has more info about different items of clothing that you can pack, regardless of the season when you're traveling.



Find Russian equivalents for the American-style dates given in the left column. Check out Appendix C for the correct answers.

1. **12/01/2005**	a. **pyervoye dyekabrya dvye tysyachi pyatogo goda**
2. **01/03/1999**	b. **vosyem′nadtsatoye maya tysyacha dyevyatsot shyest′dyesyat vtorogo goda**
3. **05/18/1962**	c. **dvadtsat′ vtoroye syentyabrya tysyacha dyevyat′sot pyat′dyesyat shyestogo goda**
4. **09/22/1956**	d. **tryet′ye yanvarya tysyacha dyevyatsot dyevyanosto dyevyatogo goda**

Which of the following places of interest is not located in St. Petersburg? See Appendix C for the answer.

1. **Piskaryovskoye kladbish′ye**
2. **Novodyevich′ye kladbish′ye**
3. **Ermitazh**
4. **Russkij muzyej**

Chapter 12

Getting Around: Planes, Trains, and More

In This Chapter

- Moving along with motion verbs
- Making your way through the airport
- Exploring public transportation
- Traveling by train

As the Russian proverb has it, **Yazyk do Kiyeva dovyedyot** (ee-*zihk* dah *kee*-ee-vuh duh-vee-*dyot*), which translates as "Your tongue will lead you to Kiev," and basically means, "Ask questions, and you'll get anywhere." With the help of this chapter, you'll be able to ask your way into the most well-concealed corners of the Russian land via several different modes of transportation. And you'll definitely be able to make it to Kiev!

Understanding Verbs of Motion

Every language has a lot of words for things the speakers of that language know well. That's why the Eskimos have 12 different words for "snow." Russians have a lot of space to move around; maybe that's why they have so many different verbs of motion.

In English, the verb "to go" can refer to walking, flying by plane, or traveling by boat (among other options). That's not the case in Russian; in fact, for one very simple and straightforward English infinitive "to go," Russian has several equivalents. Each of these verbs has its own (and we should say, very erratic) conjugation pattern.

Your choice of verb depends on many different factors and your intended message. To mention just a few factors, the choice depends on

- Whether the motion is performed with a vehicle or without it
- Whether the motion indicates a regular habitual motion
- Whether the motion takes place at the moment of speaking



Why does Russian have so many words to indicate movement? Having this distinction helps make a message clearer and even saves time on unnecessary questions. For example, when you say "I want to go to the theater tonight" in English, it's not quite clear whether you're going to drive, walk, or take a train, and so the listener may have to ask for additional information, such as "How are you going to get there?" or "Will you drive?" In Russian, this information is already packed into your answer, depending on the verb that you use. Your verb choice eliminates the need to ask additional questions and may save the listener a lot of time. Neat, isn't it?

In the following sections, we explain the verbs of motion to use when you're speaking of habitual or present movement. We also show you how to talk about the exact places you're going.

Going by foot or vehicle habitually

To talk about moving around generally, you use the *multidirectional verbs* **khodit'** (khah-*deet'*; to go on foot) and **yezdit'** (*yez*-deet'; to go by vehicle). If you're talking about walking around the city or driving around the country, these two verbs are the ones to use.

You also use the multidirectional verbs **khodit'** and **yezdit'** when you talk about repeated trips there and back, such as **ya khozhu v shkolu** (ya khah-*zhoo* f *shkoh*-loo; I go to school) and **on yezdit na rabotu** (ohn *yez*-deet nah ruh-*boh*-too; he goes to work by vehicle).

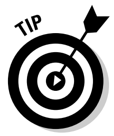
These two verbs indicate regular habitual motion in the present tense. As an example of how to use these verbs, think of places that you go to once a week, every day, two times a month, once a year, or every weekend. Most folks, for example, have to go to work every day. In Russian you say:

- **Ya khozhu na rabotu kazhdyj dyen'** (ya khah-*zhoo* nuh ruh-*boh*-too *kahzh*-dihy dyen'; I go to work every day) if you go by foot
- **Ya yezzhu na rabotu kazhdyj dyen'** (ya *yez*-zhoo nuh ruh-*boh*–too *kahzh*-dihy dyen'; I go to work every day) if you go by vehicle

The verb **khodit'** is conjugated in Table 12-1.

Table 12-1 Conjugation of Khodit'

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya khozhu	ya khah-*zhoo*	I go on foot
ty khodish'	tih *khoh*-deesh'	You go on foot (informal singular)
on/ona/ono khodit	ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh* *khoh*-deet	He/she/it goes on foot
my khodim	mih *khoh*-deem	We go on foot
vy khoditye	vih *khoh*-dee-tee	You go on foot (formal singular and plural)
oni khodyat	ah-*nee* *khoh*-dyet	They go on foot



When you talk about walking, you also can use the expression **khodit' pyeshkom** (khah-*deet'* peesh-*kohm*; to go by foot, to walk). This expression sounds redundant, but that's the way it's used in Russian.

The verb **yezdit'** is conjugated in Table 12-2.

Table 12-2 Conjugation of Yezdit'

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya yezzhu	ya *yez*-zhoo	I go by vehicle
ty yezdish'	tih *yez*-deesh'	You go by vehicle (informal singular)
on/ona/ono yezdit	ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh* *yez*-deet	He/she/it goes by vehicle
my yezdim	mih *yez*-deem	We go by vehicle
vy yezdite	vih *yez*-dee-tee	You pl. go by vehicle (formal singular and plural)
oni yezdyat	ah-*nee* *yez*-dyet	They go by vehicle

You also can specify the vehicle you're using with one of these phrases:

- **yezdit' na taksi** (*yez*-deet' nah tuhk-*see;* to go by taxi)
- **yezdit' na marshrutkye** (*yez*-deet' nah muhr-*shroot*-kee; to go by minivan)
- **yezdit' na avtobusye** (*yez*-deet' nah uhf-*toh*-boo-see; to go by bus)
- **yezdit' na myetro** (*yez*-deet' nah mee-*troh*; to go by metro)

- **yezdit' na poyezdye** (*yez*-deet' nah *poh*-yeez-dee; to go by train)
- **yezdit' na mashinye** (*yez*-deet' nah muh-*shih*-nee; to go by car)

Going by foot or vehicle at the present time

In Russian, your word choice depends on whether you're moving around generally (such as driving around the city or walking around your house) or purposefully moving in a specific direction or to a specific place. To talk about moving around generally, you use the *multidirectional verbs* **khodit'** and **yezdit',** which we discuss in the previous section.

You use different verbs (called *unidirectional verbs*) to specify that you're moving in a specific direction or to a specific place. You also use these verbs to indicate motion performed at the present moment.

For walking, use the verb **idti** (ee-*tee*; to go in one direction by foot), such as in the phrase **Ya idu na rabotu** (ya ee-*doo* nuh ruh-*boh*-too; I am walking to work). Here's the conjugation of **idti:**

- **Ya idu** (yah ee-*doo*; I am going)
- **Ty idyosh'** (tih ee-*dyohsh'*; You are going; informal singular)
- **On/on/ono idyot** (ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh* ee-*dyot*; He/she/it is going)
- **My idyom** (mih ee-*dyom*; We are going)
- **Vy idyotye** (vih ee-*dyo*-tee; You are going; formal singular and plural)
- **Oni idut** (ah-*nee* ee-*doot*; They are going)

For moving by a vehicle, use the unidirectional verb **yekhat'** (*ye*-khaht'; to go in one direction by a vehicle):

- **Ya yedu** (ya *ye*-doo; I am going)
- **Ty yedyesh'** (tih *ye*-deesh'; You are going; informal singular)
- **On/ona/ono yedyet** (ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh* *ye*-deet; He/she/it is going)
- **My yedyem** (mih *ye*-deem; We are going)
- **Vy yedyetye** (vih *ye*-dee-tee; You are going; formal singular and plural)
- **Oni yedut** (ah-*nee* *ye*-doot; They are going)

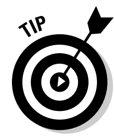
Explaining where you're going

To tell where you're going specifically, use the prepositions **v** (v; to) or **na** (nah; to) + the accusative case of the place you're going. See Chapter 15 for details on these particular prepositions:

- **Ya idu v tyeatr** (ya ee-*doo* f tee-*ahtr*; I am going to the theater)
- **Ona idyot na kontsyert** (ah-*nah* ee-*dyot* nuh kahn-*tsehrt*; She is going to the concert)

For walking or driving around a place, use the preposition **po** (pah; around) + the dative case (for more information on cases, see Chapter 2):

- **Ona khodit po Moskvye** (ah-*nah* *khoh*-deet puh mahsk-*vye*; She walks around Moscow)
- **My yezdim po tsyentru goroda** (mih *yez*-deem pah *tsehnt*-roo *goh*-ruh-duh; We drive around downtown)



Now the good news! As long as you're moving within the city, you don't need to make a distinction between going by vehicle and walking. Even if you change three modes of public transportation on the way to the library, you're still perfectly fine saying **ya idu v bibliotyeku** (ya ee-*doo* v beeb-lee-ah-*tye*-koo; I'm going to the library). This distinction has remained in the language since the times when cities were small enough so that it was possible to walk everywhere. If you're going out of town, however, it's obvious that you need to use transportation, unless you're prepared to walk for months.



Remember to use **yezdit'** or **yekhat'** (to go by vehicle) when you talk about going to other cities! Otherwise, if you say **ya idu v Moskvu** (ya ee-*doo* v mahsk-*voo*), you make it sound like you're embarking on an enduring walking pilgrimage to Moscow, which is probably not your intention.



Sometimes Russians drop pronouns in sentences when using verbs of motion; it's more conversational. For example, instead of **Kuda ty idyosh'?** (koo-*dah* tih ee-*dyosh'*; Where are you going?) you may hear simply **Kuda idyosh'?** (koo-*dah* ee-*dyosh'*; Where are you going?) And instead of saying **Ya idu v tyeatr** (ya ee-*doo* f tee-*ahtr*; I'm going to the theater), you may simply say **Idu v tyeatr** (ee-*doo* f tee-*ahtr*; I'm going to the theater).

Talkin' the Talk



Sarah got a new job in Moscow. On the way to work, she meets her Russian friend Kolya.

Sarah: **Privyet! Kuda idyosh'?**
pree-*vyet*! koo-*dah* ee-*dyosh'*?
Hi! Where are (you) going?

Kolya: **Na rabotu. Ya khozhu na rabotu pyeshkom kazhdyj dyen'.**
nuh ruh-*boh*-too. ya khah-*zhoo* nuh ruh-*boh*-too peesh-*kohm kahzh*-dihy dyen'.
I'm going to work. I walk to work every day.

Sarah: **A ya yezzhu na myetro. Kolya, u tyebya yest' plany na vyechyer? Davaj pojdyom v kino.**
ah ya *ye*-zhoo nuh mee-*troh*. *koh*-lye, oo tee-*bya* yest' *plah*-nih nuh *vye*-cheer? duh-*vahy* pahy-*dyom* v kee-*noh.*
And I go by metro. Kolya, do you have plans for tonight? Let's go to the movies.

Kolya: **Syegodnya nye mogu. Idu s rodityelyami v tyeatr.**
see-*vohd*-nye nee mah-*goo*. ee-*doo* s rah-*dee*-tee-lee-mee f tee-*ahtr*.
Tonight, I can't. I'm going to the theater with my parents.

Words to Know

U tyebya yest' plany na vyechyer?	oo tee-bya yest' plah-nih nuh vye-cheer	Do you have plans for tonight?
Syegodnya nye mogu.	see-vohd-nye nee mah-goo	Tonight, I can't.
s rodityelyami	s rah-dee-tee-lee-mee	with my parents

Navigating the Airport

Chances are, if you visit Russia, you enter by **samolyot** (suh-mah-*lyot*; plane). If not, you probably fly somewhere within the country during your visit — those 6.6 million square miles of land make air travel especially appealing. Whether you're leaving Moscow for a 20-minute flight to St. Petersburg or a 9-hour flight to Vladivostok, the vocabulary you find in the following sections helps you plan and enjoy your trip by air.

Using the verb "to fly"

You use a special verb of motion when you talk about flying: **lyetyet'** (lee-*tyet'*; to fly). You can't use the verb **yekhat'** (covered in "Going by foot or vehicle at the present time" earlier in this chapter) when you talk about traveling by plane, unless the plane is wheeling around the airport without actually leaving the ground. If the plane actually takes off, you have to use the verb **lyetyet',** conjugated in Table 12-3.

Table 12-3 Conjugation of Lyetyet'

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya lyechu	ya lee-*choo*	I fly or I am flying
ty lyetish'	tih lee-*teesh'*	You fly or You are flying (informal singular)
on/ona/ono lyetit	ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh* lee-*teet*	He/she/it flies or He/she/it is flying
my lyetim	mih lee-*teem*	We fly or We are flying
vy lyetitye	vih lee-*tee*-tee	You fly or You are flying (formal singular and plural)
oni lyetyat	ah-*nee* lee-*tyat*	They fly or They are flying

Checking in and boarding your flight

After you arrive at the **aeroport** (ah-eh-rah-*pohrt*; airport), you need to choose between the areas called **zal prilyota** (zahl pree-*lyo*-tuh; arrivals) and **zal vylyeta** (zahl *vih*-lee-tuh; departures). To inquire about the status of your flight, look at the **informatsionnoye tablo** (een-fuhr-muh-tsih-*oh*-nuh-ye tahb-*loh*; departures and arrivals display). Arrivals are called **pribytiye** (pree-*bih*-tee-ee) and departures are called **otpravlyeniye** (uht-pruhv-*lye*-nee-ee).



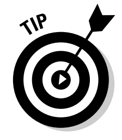
When you come for **ryegistratsiya** (ree-geest-*rah*-tsih-ye; check-in), you need to have your **bilyet** (bee-*lyet*; ticket) and your **pasport** (*pahs*-puhrt; passport). It also helps to know your **nomyer ryejsa** (*noh*-meer *ryey*-suh; flight number). Here are some questions you may hear as you check in:

- **Vy budyetye sdavat' bagazh?** (vih *boo*-dee-tee zdah-*vaht'* buh-*gahsh*; Are you checking any luggage?)
- **Vy ostavlyali vash bagazh byez prismotra?** (vih ahs-tahv-*lya*-lee vahsh buh-*gahsh* byes pree-*smoh*-truh; Have you left your luggage unattended?)

Be prepared to **projti provyerku** (prahy-*tee* prah-*vyer*-koo; to go through check-in) and then **sluzhba byezopasnosti** (*sloozh*-buh bee-zah-*pahs*-nuhs-tee; security check), where you probably have to pass through a **myetal-loiskatyel'** (mee-*tah*-luh-ees-*kah*-teel'; metal detector). If you forget your gate number, you can ask **Kakoj u myenya nomyer vykhoda?** (kuh-*kohy* oo mee-*nya noh*-meer *vih*-khuh-duh; What's my gate number?) At the gate, you may ask the **styuard** (styu-*ahrt*; male flight attendant) or **styuardyessa** (styu-uhr-*dye*-suh; female flight attendant): **Eto ryejs v . . . ?** (*eh*-tuh ryeys v; Is this the flight to . . . ?)

Have your **posadochnyj talon** (pah-*sah*-duhch-nihy tuh-*lohn*; boarding pass) ready; **posadka** (pah-*saht*-kuh; boarding) is about to begin. Don't forget your **ruchnoj bagazh** (rooch-*nohy* buh-*gahsh*; carry-on). And find out whether your seat is a **myesto u okna** (*myes*-tuh oo ahk-*nah*; window seat), **myesto u prokhoda** (*myes*-tuh oo prah-*khoh*-duh; aisle seat), or a **myesto v syeryedinye** (*myes*-tuh f see-ree-*dee*-nee; middle seat). When you're **na bortu** (nuh bahr-*too*; on board), you meet your **pilot** (pee-*loht*; pilot) and **ekipazh** (eh-kee-*pahsh*; crew).

Handling passport control and customs



If you're taking an international flight, shortly before arrival you're handed **tamozhyennaya dyeklaratsiya** (tuh-*moh*-zhih-nuh-ye deek-luh-*rah*-tsih-ye; customs declaration). Fill it out on the plane to save yourself some time in the chaos of the airport. If you notice a bored-looking Russian in the seat next to you, feel free to ask him or her for assistance: **Pomogitye mnye, pozhalujsta, zapolnit' tamozhyennuyu dyeklaratsiyu?** (puh-mah-*gee*-tee mnye pah-*zhahl*-stuh zuh-*pohl*-neet' tuh-*moh*-zhih-noo-yu deek-luh-*rah*-tsih-yu; Would you please help me to fill out the customs declaration?)

After leaving the plane and walking through a corridor maze, you see a crowded hall with **pasportnyj kontrol'** (*pahs*-puhrt-nihy kahnt-*rohl'*; passport control). To save yourself some frustration, make sure you get into the right line: One line is for **grazhdanye Rossii** (*grahzh*-duh-nee rah-*see*-ee; Russian citizens), and one is for **inostranniye grazhdanye** (ee-nahs-*trah*-nih-ee *grahzh*-duh-nee; foreign citizens).

At passport control, you show your **pasport** (*pahs*-puhrt; passport) and **viza** (*vee*-zah; visa); see Chapter 11 for more about these documents. A **pogranichnik** (puhg-ruh-*neech*-neek; border official) asks you **Tsyel' priyezda?** (tsehl' pree-*yez*-duh; The purpose of your visit?) You may answer:

- **turizm** (too-*reezm*; tourism)
- **rabota** (ruh-*boh*-tuh; work)
- **uchyoba** (oo-*choh*-buh; studies)
- **chastnyj vizit** (*chahs*-nihy vee-*zeet*; private visit)

After you're done with passport control, it's time to pick up your **bagazh.** To find the baggage claim, just follow the signs saying **Bagazh** (buh-*gahsh*; luggage). This word means both "luggage" and "baggage claim." The next step is going through **tamozhyennyj dosmotr** (tuh-*moh*-zhih-nihy dahs-*mohtr*; customs). The best way to go is **zyelyonyj koridor** (zee-*lyo*-nihy kuh-ree-*dohr*; nothing to declare passage way, *Literally:* green corridor). Otherwise, you have to deal with **tamozhyenniki** (tuh-*moh*-zhih-nee-kee; customs officers) and answer the question **Chto dyeklariruyete?** (shtoh deek-luh-*ree*-roo-ee-tee; What would you like to declare?)

To answer, say **Ya dyeklariruyu . . .** (ya deek-luh-*ree*-roo-yu; I'm declaring . . .) + the word for what you are declaring in the accusative case (see Chapter 2 for case details). The following items usually need to be declared:

- **alkogol'** (uhl-kah-*gohl'*; alcohol)
- **dragotsyennosti** (druh-gah-*tseh*-nuhs-tee; jewelry)
- **proizvyedyeniya iskusstva** (pruh-eez-vee-*dye*-nee-ye ees-*koost*-vuh; works of art)

Talkin' the Talk



Tony just arrived in Moscow by plane. He's going through passport control at the airport.

Tony:	**Dobryj dyen'. Vot moj pasport.** *dohb*-rihy dyen'. voht mohy *pahs*-puhrt. Good afternoon. Here's my passport.
Tamozhennik: (customs officer)	**Khorosho. A gdye viza?** khuh-rah-*shoh*. ah gdye *vee*-zuh? Great. And where is your visa?
Tony:	**Vot ona.** voht ah-*nah*. Here it is.

Tamozhennik:	**Aga, vizhu. Tsyel' priyezda?** ah-*gah*, *vee*-zhoo. tsehl' pree-*yez*-duh? All right, I see. The purpose of your visit?
Tony:	**Turizm.** too-*reezm*. Tourism.

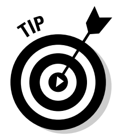
Words to Know

Vot moj pasport.	voht mohy pahs-pahrt	Here's my passport.
A gdye viza?	ah gdye vee-zuh	And where is your visa?
Vot ona.	voht ah-nah	Here it is.

Leaving the airport

The moment you step out of customs, you're attacked by an aggressive mob of cab drivers. They speak numerous foreign languages and offer ungodly fares to go to the city. Ignore them and move toward the **vykhod** (*vih*-khuht; exit), where the more timid (and usually more honest) cab drivers reside. You may try to negotiate your fare (see "Taking a taxi" later in this chapter).

If you're up for an adventure and don't mind dragging your luggage around through the crowds, you also can leave the airport via public transportation. A **marshrutka** (muhr-*shroot*-kuh; minivan) is usually a fast way to make it to the city (see "Using minivans" later in this chapter for details). Some airports, such as the one in Moscow, have **elyektrichki** (eh-leek-*treech*-kee; trains) running to the city. The **avtobus** (uhf-*toh*-boos; bus) isn't a very good way to leave the airport; they're slow and far between.



Before you leave the airport, you see **obmyen valyut** (ahb-*myen* vuh-*lyut*; currency exchange). Normally, you don't need to change your currency at the airport; the exchange rate isn't very good, and any cab driver eagerly accepts U.S. dollars. Just make sure you have a variety of small bills; they aren't too good at providing change. Watch out for the way your bills look, too: Old, torn, or worn bills won't be accepted, especially outside of the cities. See Chapter 14 for additional money matters.

Conquering Public Transportation

Russians hop around their humongous cities with butterfly ease, changing two to three means of public transportation during a one-way trip to work. And so can you. Being a public transportation guru isn't necessary. You just need to know where to look for the information and how to ask the right questions, which you discover in the following sections.

Taking a taxi



The easiest way to get around unfamiliar cities and to have your share of good conversation with interesting personalities is, of course, a cab ride. Russian **taksi** (tuhk-*see*; cabs) don't always look like cabs. While the official ones are decorated with a checkers-like design or have **TAKSI** in large print on their sides, you also see plenty of regular-looking cars that stop when you raise your arm to hail a cab. Those cars are neither cabs in disguise nor necessarily serial killers; they're just regular citizens trying to make an extra $10 on the way to work. Most Russians feel safe riding with them; if you don't, then you're better off calling the **sluzhba taksi** (*sloozh*-buh tuhk-*see*; cab service). When you call the **sluzhba taksi,** they ask:

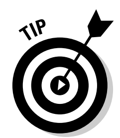
- **vash adryes** (vahsh *ahd*-rees; your address)
- **Kuda yedyetye?** (koo-*dah ye*-dee-tee; Where are you going?)



You use **kuda** (koo-*dah*; where to) rather than **gdye** (gdye; where) when you're asking about movement *toward* a destination. You can think of **kuda** as meaning "where to?" and **gdye** as simply "where?" Likewise, you use **tuda** (too-*dah*; to there) instead of **tam** (tahm; there) when you want to emphasize movement *toward* a destination. Simply stated: With verbs of motion, you usually use **kuda** rather than **gdye** and **tuda** rather than **tam.**

You can ask for your fare while you're ordering your cab: **Skol'ko eto budyet stoit'?** (*skohl'*-kuh *eh*-tuh *boo*-deet *stoh*-eet'; How much would that be?) This fare is usually non-negotiable. If you hail a cab in the street, however, you have plenty of room for negotiating.

Open your conversation with the question **Skol'ko voz'myotye do Bol'shogo?** (*skohl'*-kuh vahz'-*myo*-tee duh bahl'-*shoh*-vuh; How much will you charge me to go to the Bolshoy?) After the driver offers his fare, such as **sto rublyej** (stoh roob-*lyey*; 100 rubles), offer half the sum: **Davajtye za pyatdyesyat'!** (dah-*vahy*-tee zuh pee-dee-*syat*; what about 50? *Literally:* Let's do it for 50!) If the driver says **nyet,** add a little to your price: **Togda davajtye za syem'dyesyat!** (tahg-*dah* duh-*vahy*-tee zuh *syem'*-dee-seet; What about 70 then? *Literally:* Let's do it for 70!) Sooner or later, you find the common ground. (For more on numbers, see Chapter 2.)



You don't need to **davat' chayevye** (duh-*vaht'* chuh-ee-*vih*-ee; to give a tip) to cab drivers in Russia.

Using minivans



The transport of choice in today's Russia is the **marshrutka** (muhr-*shroot*-kuh), a minivan with a set route. **Marshrutki** (muhr-*shroot*-kee; minivans) are usually fast and often go to any destination. They stop only where passengers need to get off, so make sure you tell the driver something like **Ostanovitye, pozhalujsta, u vokzala?** (uh-stuh-nah-*vee*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh oo vahk-*zah*-luh; Would you please stop at the railway station?)

Marshrutki have different routes, marked by numbers. You can recognize a **marshrutka** by a piece of paper with its number in the front window. To board a **marshrutka,** you need to go to a place where it stops. These places aren't usually marked, so you need to ask a local **Gdye ostanavlivayutsya marshrutki?** (gdye uhs-tuh-*nahv*-lee-vuh-yut-sye muhr-*shroot*-kee; Where do the minivans stop?) **Marshrutki** have a set fare usually written on a piece of paper above the driver's head, and you need cash to pay for **marshrutki.**

Catching buses, trolley buses, and trams

The first difficulty with all this variety of Russian public transportation is that in English, all these things are called "buses." Here's a short comprehensive guide on how to tell one item from another:

- **avtobus** (uhf-*toh*-boos) — a bus as you know it
- **trollyejbus** (trah-*lye*-boos) — a bus connected to electric wires above
- **tramvaj** (truhm-*vahy*) — a bus connected to electric wires and running on rails



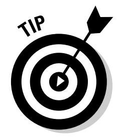
If you find yourself on something moving on rails and not connected to electric wires above, it's a train, and it's probably taking you to a different city! See "Embarking on a Railway Adventure" later in this chapter for more.

Now that you can identify the modes of transportation, you're half set. Catch the **avtobus, trollyejbus,** or **tramvaj** at the **avtobusnaya ostanovka** (uhf-*toh*-boos-nuh-ye uhs-tuh-*nohf*-kuh; bus stop), **trollyejbusnaya ostanovka** (trah-*lye*-boos-nuh-ye uhs-tuh-*nohf*-kuh; trolleybus stop), and **tramvajnaya ostanovka** (truhm-*vahy*-nuh-ye uhs-tuh-*nohf*-kuh; tram stop), respectively. You see a sign with **A** for **avtobus** and **T** for **trollyejbus** or **tramvaj.** You may also see a **raspisaniye** (ruhs-pee-*sah*-nee-ye; schedule) and a **karta marshruta** (*kahr*-tuh muhr-*shroo*-tuh; route map).



Unless you're into orienteering, the best way to find your route is to ask the locals. They're usually extremely friendly and happy to provide you with more information than you want to have. Just ask these questions:

- **Kak mnye doyekhat' do Krasnoj Plosh'adi?** (kahk mnye dah-*ye*-khuht' dah *krahs*-nuhy *ploh*-sh'ee-dee; How can I get to the Red Square?)
- **Etot avtobus idyot do Ermitazha?** (*eh*-tuht uhf-*toh*-boos ee-*dyot* duh ehr-mee-*tah*-zhuh; Will this bus take me to the Hermitage?)
- **Gdye mozhno kupit' bilyety?** (gdye *mohzh*-nuh koo-*peet'* bee-*lye*-tih; Where can I buy tickets?)

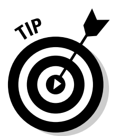


Ways to pay for a bus ride vary. In some cities, you need to buy **bilyety** (bee-*lye*-tih; tickets) ahead of time in **kioski** (kee-*ohs*-kee; ticket kiosks). In others, you pay directly to the **vodityel'** (vah-*dee*-teel'; driver) or **konduktor** (kahn-*dook*-tuhr; bus conductor) when you board the bus.

Hopping onto the subway

During Soviet times, all Russian cities were divided into those that have a **myetro** (mee-*troh*; subway) and those that don't. Life in cities with the **myetro** was considered a step better than in those without. Having a **myetro** was a sign of living in a big city. Nowadays, all cities in Russia are divided into two categories: Moscow and non-Moscow. But the **myetro** is still a big deal.

And no wonder. The Russian **myetro** is beautiful, clean, user-friendly, and cheap. It connects the most distant parts of such humongous cities as Moscow, and it's impenetrable to traffic complications. During the day, trains come every two to three minutes. Unfortunately, it's usually closed between 1:30 a.m. and 4:30 a.m. Around 4:30 a.m., it's easy to locate a **stantsiya myetro** (*stahn*-tsee-ye meet-*roh*; subway station) on a Moscow street by a crowd of young people in clubbing clothes waiting for the **myetro** to open so they can go home.



The Moscow **myetro** has 11 lines. Each **vyetka** (*vyet*-kuh; subway line) has its own name and is marked by its own color. You can take a look at a Moscow **myetro** map at `www.hotels-moscow.ru/metro.html`.

To take the **myetro,** you need to buy a **kartochka** (*kahr*-tuhch-kuh; fare card) for any number of trips in the **vyestibyul' myetro** (vees-tee-*byu*-lee meet-*roh*; metro foyer) or a **proyezdnoj** (pruh-eez-*nohy*; pass).

Embarking on a Railway Adventure

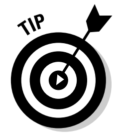
Taking a **poyezd** (*poh*-eest; train) is probably one of the best adventures you can have in Russia. In the following sections, find out how to read a train schedule, how to choose the type of train that's just right for you, how to buy a ticket, and how to board the train.

Making sense of a train schedule

As you're standing in front of a giant timetable tableau **na vokzale** (nuh vahk-*zah*-lee; at a railway station), it probably seems to provide more information that you want to have. You see the following:

- **stantsiya otpravlyeniya** (*stahn*-tsih-ye uht-prahv-*lye*-nee-ye; departure station)
- **stantsiya pribytiya** (*stahn*-tsih-ye pree-*bih*-tee-ye; arrival station)
- **vryemya v puti** (*vrye*-mye f poo-*tee*; travel time)
- **nomyer poyezda** (*noh*-meer *poh*-eez-duh; train number)

The column with a bunch of unfamiliar words divided by commas is probably the list of stations where the train stops. You also see **vryemya otpravleniya** (*vrye*-mye uht-pruhv-*lye*-nee-ye; departure time) and **vryemya pribytiya** (*vrye*-mye pree-*bih*-tee-ye; arrival time).

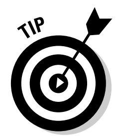


The abbreviation **Ch** stands for **chyotnyye** (*choht*-nee-ee; even-numbered dates) and the abbreviation **Nech** stands for **nyechyotnye dni** (nee-*choht*-nee-ee dnee; odd-numbered dates), which are the days when the train runs.

Surveying types of trains and cars

The types of trains you probably want to know, in the order of increasing price and quality, are

- **elyektrichka** (eh-leek-*treech*-kuh; suburban train)
- **skorostnoj poyezd** (skuh-rahs-*nohy poh*-eest; a low-speed train)
- **skoryj poyezd** (*skoh*-rihy *poh*-eest; a faster and more expensive train)
- **firmyennyj poyezd** (*feer*-mee-nihy *poh*-eest; premium train, *Literally:* company train)



Unless you're traveling to the suburbs, the **firmyennyj poyezd** is your best choice; you'll be surprised with its speed and service. The **elyektrichka** is a good alternative to buses and taxis if you're going to the suburbs.

After you pick a train, you need to pick the right kind of **vagon** (vah-*gohn*; train car). Every train, except for the **elyektrichka,** have the following types of cars (in order of increasing cost):

- **obsh'iy vagon** (*ohb*-sh'eey vah-*gohn*) This train car consists of just benches with a bunch of people sitting around. Not recommended, unless your travel time is just a couple of hours.
- **platskart** (pluhts-*kahrt*) A no-privacy sleeping car with way too many people; not divided into compartments. Not recommended, unless you're into extreme sociological experiments.
- **kupye** (koo-*peh*) A good, affordable sleeping car with four-person compartments.
- **spal'nyj vagon** (*spahl'*-nihy vah-*gohn*) The granddaddy of them all; a two-person sleeping compartment. May be pricey.

Buying tickets

You can **kupit' bilyety** (koo-*peet'* bee-*lye*-tih; buy tickets) directly at the railway station, at a travel agency, or in a **zhyelyeznodorozhnyye kassy** (zhih-*lyez*-nuh-dah-*rohzh*-nih-ee *kah*-sih; railway ticket office), which you can find throughout the city. Remember to bring your **pasport** (*pahs*-puhrt; passport) and **nalichnyye dyen'gi** (nuh-*leech*-nih-ee *dyen'*-gee; cash); the ticket office may not accept credit cards.



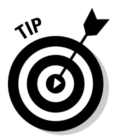
You can start your dialogue with **Mnye nuzhyen bilyet v** (mnye *noo*-zheen bee-*lyet* v) + the name of the city you're heading for in the accusative case (see Chapter 2 for more about cases). The ticket salesperson probably asks you the following questions:

- **Na kakoye chislo?** (nuh kuh-*koh*-ee chees-*loh*; For what date?)
- **Vam kupye ili platskart?** (vahm koo-*peh ee*-lee pluhts-*kahrt*; Would you like a compartment car or a reserved berth?)
- **V odnu storonu ili tuda i obratno?** (v ahd-*noo stoh*-ruh-noo *ee*-lee too-*dah* ee ah-*braht*-nuh; One way or round trip?)

You can also tell the ticket salesperson what kind of seat you prefer: **vyerkhnyaya polka** (*vyerkh*-nee-ye *pohl*-kuh; top fold down bed) or **nizhnyaya polka** (*neezh*-nye-ye *pohl*-kuh; bottom fold down bed). On **elyektrichki** (eh-leek-*treech*-kee; suburban trains), which don't have fold down beds, seats aren't assigned.

Stocking up on essentials for your ride

After you find out what **pyeron** (pee-*rohn*; platform) your train is departing from, you can take care of important things, such as stocking up on food and reading materials. Both of these resources are readily available on the train itself; you can always buy food in the **vagon-ryestoran** (vah-*gohn* rees-tah-*rahn*; restaurant car). Numerous vendors also walk through the train offering snacks, as well as **krossvordy** (krahs-*vohr*-dih; crossword puzzles) and **anyekdoty** (ah-neek-*doh*-tih; joke collections). However, if you're a little more picky about what you read, you may want to prepare something beforehand. As for the food, excessive eating on the train is a ritual, and if you want a full train experience, you have to partake in it.



On the train, have a lot of small bills ready to pay for your **postyel'noye byel'yo** (pahs-*tyel'*-nuh-ee beel'-*yo*; bed sheets), **chaj** (chahy; tea), and the numerous snacks you buy at train stations. No ATMs are available, and ice-cream vendors don't usually accept credit cards.

Boarding the train

You find your **nomyer vagona** (*noh*-meer vah-*goh*-nuh; car number) on your **bilyet** (bee-*lyet*; ticket). When you approach your train car (it's a good idea to start moving in that direction about half an hour before the departure time), you see a friendly (or not) **provodnik** (pruh-vahd-*neek*; male train attendant) or **provodnitsa** (pruh-vahd-*nee*-tsuh; female train attendant) who wants to see your **bilyet** and **pasport.**



For traveling in Russia, always have your passport and your visa with you! You can't get on the train or the plane or check into a hotel without it. For security reasons, also make photocopies of these documents, and carry the copies in a different pocket.

When you're on the train, you check out **postyel'noye byel'yo** (pahs-*tyel'*-nuh-ee beel'-*yoh*; bed sheets) from the **provodnik,** and you're ready to go!

Discovering the joys of a train trip



Russians tend to treat a train trip like a small vacation. Even before the train takes off, they change into comfortable clothes and **tapochki** (*tah*-puhch-kee; slippers) to make it easier to get in and out of "bed." Before the train leaves the city limits, they take out plentiful snacks and start the first of the long procession of on-the-train meals. People in your compartment will definitely invite you to share their meal, so make sure you offer them something, too.

A **provodnik** (pruh-vahd-*neek*; male train attendant) or a **provodnitsa** (pruh-vahd-*nee*-tsuh; female train attendant) drops by throughout the ride offering hot tea and coffee. Take them up on the offer, at least for the joy of holding unique Russian **podstakanniki** (puhd-stuh-*kah*-nee-kee; glass holders) that can't be found anywhere except in Russian trains and rarity collections.

At the stops, people almost always get out to walk around on the platform, stretch their legs, and smoke a cigarette. It's also a good chance to buy yet more food from **babushki** (*bah*-boosh-kee; local old ladies) who sell home-made food, such as **frukty** (*frook*-tih; fruit), **morozhyenoye** (mah-*roh*-zhih-nuh-ee; ice-cream), and **pivo** (*pee*-vuh; beer) on the platform. Some phrases to use during your train ride:

- **Skol'ko stoim na etoj stantsii?** (*skohl'*-kuh stah-*eem* nuh *eh*-tuhy *stahn*-tsee-ee; How long is the stop at this station?)
- **Vy nye vozrazhayete, yesli ya otkroyu okno?** (vih nee vuhz-ruh-*zhah*-ee-tee, *yes*-lee ya aht-*kroh*-yu ahk-*noh*; Do you mind if I open the window?)



Look at these sentences with motion verbs. Which of them just don't make sense? See Appendix C for the answers.

1. **Ya idu v shkolu.**
2. **Ya yedu pyeshkom.**
3. **On idyot v muzyej.**
4. **My idyom v Moskvu.**
5. **Oni yedut na mashinye.**

Which of the following will you NOT see at an airport? See Appendix C for the answer.

a. **bagazh**

b. **pasportnyj kontrol'**

c. **poyezd**

d. **zyelyonyj koridor**

Chapter 13

Staying at a Hotel

In This Chapter

- Finding the hotel of your dreams
- Checking in and checking out
- Resolving problems you may have to deal with

Staying in a comfortable **gostinitsa** (gahs-*tee*-nee-tsuh; hotel) while you travel is extremely important. If you have a nice and comfy hotel room, life is good and you probably love the country you're in. If, however, you stay in an old dilapidated hotel, you probably feel miserable and sorry that you ever came. To make your stay in a Russian hotel more pleasurable, in this chapter we show you how to find and book the right hotel room, what to say and do when checking in, how to resolve service problems, and how to check out and pay your bill.

Booking the Hotel That's Right for You

To ensure the hotel you're staying in doesn't disappoint you, make sure the room is what you want. In the following sections, you discover different types of hotels to choose from and find out to how to make reservations in Russian.

Distinguishing different types of hotels

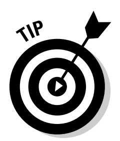
Two main types of hotels exist in Russia: the more expensive, more comfortable **pyatizvyozdnyye gostinitsy** (pee-tee-*zvyozd*-nih-ee gahs-*tee*-nee-tsih; five-star hotels) and the less expensive, less comfortable **odnozvyozdnyye gostinitsy** (uhd-nah-*zvyozd*-nih-ee gahs-*tee*-nee-tsih; one-star hotels). But don't be surprised if one- or two-star hotels in Russia charge you as much as four- or even five-star hotels. Another Russian puzzle for you!



You don't just stay at a hotel, you live there

What do people do in hotels? They stay there. Although Russian does have an equivalent for this verb — **ostanavlivatysya** (uhs-tuh-*nahv*-lee-vuht'-sye; to stay), Russians like using the verb **zhit'** (zhiht'; to live) to indicate the same notion. It's very common, for example, in describing where you stayed, to say something along these lines: **My zhili v gostinitse Moskva** (mih *zhih*-lee v gahs-*tee*-nee-tsee Mahs-*kvah*; We stayed in Moscow Hotel, *Literally:* We lived in Hotel Moscow).

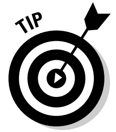
Russian today has two words for the English "hotel." One of them is a good old Russian word **gostinitsa** (gahs-*tee*-nee-tsuh; hotel), which literally means "a place for the guests." The other word is **otel'** (ah-*tehl'*; hotel), an offspring from the foreign word. Although from a linguistic point of view, both words are interchangeable, they're charged with slightly different meanings. Nobody in Russia uses the word **otel'** (hotel) in reference to a little old shabby hotel. In this situation, the word **gostinitsa** (hotel) is more appropriate. On the other hand, when speaking about luxurious four- or five-star hotels, Russians use both words interchangeably.



A good way to find out about hotels is to ask people who have already traveled to the city: **A gdye tam mozhno ostanovit'sya?** (uh gdye tahm *mohzh*-nuh uhs-tuh-nah-*veet'*-sye; And where can one stay there?) Don't be shy. Most people love to share this information. With a preliminary list of hotels, you can now either call your travel agent or just get more info on the Internet. (For more about dealing with travel agencies, see Chapter 11.)

Making a reservation

If you're making a reservation online, the forms that you fill out are self-explanatory. If, however, you prefer to make a reservation on the phone, you want to say: **Ya khotyel/khotyela by zabronirovat' nomyer** (ya khah-*tyel*/khah-*tye*-luh bih zuh-brah-*nee*-ruh-vuht' *noh*-meer; I would like to make a reservation for a room). Use **khotyel** if you're a man and **khotyela** if you're a woman.



When they talk about hotel rooms, Russians use the word **nomyer,** which also means "number." In a way it makes sense, because all rooms in a hotel have numbers!

You have to provide some important information when you make a hotel reservation on the phone. We steer you through the process in the following sections.

Stating how long you're going to stay

After you state that you want to make a reservation on the phone, the person you're talking to probably asks **Na kakoye chislo?** (nuh kuh-*koh*-ee chees-*loh*; For what date?)



To answer this very predictable question, use this formula: **Na** (nah; for) + the ordinal numeral indicating date in neuter + the name of the month in genitive case. For example, if you're planning to arrive on September 15, you say: **Na pyatnadtsatoye syentyabrya** (nuh peet-*naht*-tsuh-tuh-ee seen-teeb-*rya*; For September 15). (Check out details on cases in Chapter 2. For more on dates, see Chapter 11.)

You may also be asked from what date to what date you want to stay in the hotel: **S kakogo po kakoye chislo?** (s kuh-*koh*-vuh puh kuh-*koh*-ee chees-*loh*; From what date to what date?)



To answer this question, use **s** (s; from) + the genitive case of the ordinal number indicating the date + the genitive case of the word indicating the month + **po** (poh; until) +the ordinal numeral indicating the date in neuter gender (and nominative case) + name of the month in the genitive case.

If, for example, you're planning to stay in the hotel from June 21 to June 25, you say **S dvadtsat' pyervogo iyunya po dvadtsat' pyatoye iyunya** (s *dvaht*-tsuht' *pyer*-vuh-vuh ee-*yu*-nye pah *dvaht*-tsuht' *pya*-tuh-ee ee-*yu*-nye; from June 21 to June 25).

You also can simply state how many nights you're going to stay in the hotel. If you're checking in on June 21 at 3 p.m. and leaving on June 25 at 11 a.m., you'll be staying in the hotel **chyetyrye nochi** (chee-*tih*-ree *noh*-chee; four nights). For more about numbers with nouns, check out Chapter 2.

Choosing your room

When you're done talking about dates, you may hear: **Vy khotitye odnomyestnyj nomyer ili dvukhmyestnyj nomyer?** (vih khah-*tee*-tee uhd-nah-*myest*-nihy *ee*-lee dvookh-*myest*-nihy *noh*-meer; Do you want a single or double accommodation?)



Most rooms in hotels are either **odnomyestnyye** (uhd-nah-*myest*-nih-ee; single accommodation) or **dvukhmyestnyye** (dvookh-*myest*-nih-ee; double accommodation). If you have a third person, such as a child, you may get a **raskladushka** (ruhs-kluh-*doosh*-kuh; cot). And if you're the happy parent of two kids, you probably want to spring for an extra room.

In a Russian hotel room, you won't find king- or queen-sized beds, only **odnospal'nyye** (uhd-nah-*spahl'*-nih-ee; twins) or **dvuspal'nyye** (dvoo-*spahl'*-nih-ee; doubles).



Another very important thing you need to ask about is whether the room has a **vannaya** (*vah*-nuh-ye; bathtub), **dush** (doosh; shower) or even **tualyet** (too-uh-*lyet*; toilet). In an inexpensive hotel in a small provincial city, showers and toilets may be located **na ehtazhye** (nuh eh-tuh-*zheh*; on the floor) and not **v nomyere** (v *noh*-mee-ree; in the hotel room). To avoid such disappointments, you can ask: **V nomyere yest' vannaya, dush i tualyet?** (v *noh*-mee-ree yest' *vah*-nuh-ye doosh ee too-uh-*lyet*; Is there a bathtub, shower, and toilet in the room?) Also note that while the word **tualyet** best translates as "toilet," it really refers to the room in which a toilet is found. The actual toilet itself is called an **unitaz** (oo-nee-*tahs*).

Finding the right price

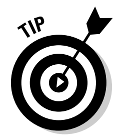
Certainly an important question to ask is **Skol'ko stoit nomyer?** (*skohl'*-kuh *stoh*-eet *noh*-meer; How much is the room?) or **Skol'ko stoyat nomyera?** (*skohl'*-kuh stoh-yet nuh-mee-*rah*; How much are the rooms?)

If the hotel you're calling has a number of vacancies, chances are the rates may be different for different rooms. If this is the case, you may hear something like: **Yest' nomyer/nomyera za syem'dyesyat yevro, za vosyem'dyesyat yevro, za sto yevro.** (yest' *noh*-meer/nuh-mee-*rah* zuh *syem'*-dee-seet *yev*-ruh, zuh *voh*-seem'-dee-seet *yev*-ruh, zuh stoh *yev*-ruh; There is a room/are rooms for 70 euros, for 80 euros, for 100 euros.)



While prices at most Russian hotels are sometimes shown in euros or dollars, you still have to pay in rubles. Why? Russian law doesn't permit most institutions to accept foreign currencies. Most Russian hotels (except for the very best five-star hotels in major cities) still don't accept credit cards. And almost no Russian hotel accepts personal checks. In general, it's a good idea to have rubles on you at all times in Russia, even before you enter the country. See Chapter 14 for more about money matters.

When you decide which room you want, say: **Ya voz'mu nomyer za vosyem'dyesyat yevro.** (ya vahz'-*moo noh*-meer zuh *voh*-seem-dee-seet *yev*-ruh; I will take a room for 80 euros.)



You may also want to inquire whether this amount includes breakfast: **Eto vklyuchayet zavtrak?** (*eh*-tuh fklyu-*chah*-eet *zahf*-truhk; Does it include breakfast?) It would be nice if it does.

Talkin' the Talk

Nancy is calling a hotel in St. Petersburg to make a reservation. She is traveling alone and is on a budget. A **rabotnik gostinitsy** (ruh-*boht*-neek gahs-*tee*-nee-tsih; hotel employee) answers the phone.

Nancy: **Ya khotyela by zabronirovat' nomyer.**
ya khah-*tye*-luh bih zuh-brah-*nee*-ruh-vuht' *noh*-meer.
I would like to make a reservation for a room.

Rabotnik gostinitsy: **Na kakoye chislo?**
nuh kuh-*koh*-ee chees-*loh?*
For what date?

Nancy: **Na dvadtsatoye noyabrya.**
nuh dvuht-*tsah*-tuh-ee nuh-eeb-*rya.*
For November 20.

Rabotnik gostinitsy: **Na dvadtsatoye noyabrya svobodnykh nomyerov nyet.**
nuh dvuht-*tsah*-tuh-ee nuh-eeb-*rya* svah-*bohd*-nihkh nuh-mee-*rohf* nyet.
There are no vacancies for November 20.

Nancy: **A na dvadtsat' pyervoye yest' nomyera?**
uh nuh *dvaht*-tsuht' *pyer*-vuh-ee yest' nuh-mee-*rah*?
Are there vacancies for the 21st?

Rabotnik gostinitsy: **Da. Odin nomyer? Na skol'ko dnyej?**
dah. ah-*deen noh*-meer? nuh *skohl'*-kuh dnyey?
Yes. One room? For how many days?

Nancy: **Da, odin. Na dvye nochi. Odnomyestnyj nomyer.**
dah, ah-*deen.* nuh dvye *noh*-chee. uhd-nah-*myest*-nihy *noh*-meer.
Yes one. For two nights. Single accommodation.

Rabotnik gostinitsy: **Yest' nomyer za sto yevro, za syem'dyesyat yevro.**
yest' *noh*-meer zuh stoh *yev*-ruh, zuh *syem*-dee-seet *yev*-ruh.
There is a room for 100 euros, and one for 70 euros.

Nancy: **Ya voz'mu nomyer za syem'dyesyat yevro. V nomyerye yest' dush i tualyet?**
ya vahz'-*moo noh*-meer zuh *syem'*-dee-seet *yev*-ruh. v *noh*-mee-ree yest' doosh ee too-uh-*lyet?*
I will take the room for 70 euros. Is there a shower and toilet in the room?

Rabotnik gostinitsy: **Da, yest'. Budyete bronirovat'?**
dah, *yest'. boo*-dee-tee brah-*nee*-ruh-vuht'?
Yes, there are. Will you be making a reservation?

Nancy: **Da, budu.**
Dah, *boo*-doo.
Yes, I will.

Words to Know

Svobodnykh nomyerov nyet.	svah-bohd-nihkh nuh-mee-rohf nyet	There are no vacancies.
A na dvadtsat' pyervoye yest' nomyera?	uh nuh dvaht-suht' pyer-vuh-ee yest' nuh-mee-rah	Are there vacancies for the 21st?
na dvye nochi	nuh dvye noh-chee	for two nights
Budyetye bronirovat'?	boo-dee-tee brah-nee-ruh-vuht'	Will you be making reservation?
Da, budu.	Dah boo-doo	Yes, I will.

Checking In

Congratulations! You made it to your hotel. To make your check-in process as smooth as possible, in the following sections, we tell you what to say when checking in, how to find your room and what to expect when you get there, and how to find what you're looking for in the hotel. We also tell you about the names of important hotel employees you may want to know.

Enduring the registration process

When you arrive at your hotel, you're probably greeted (especially if you're at a nice hotel) by a **shvyejtsar** (shvyey-*tsahr*; doorman) and a **nosil'sh'ik** (nah-*seel'*-sh'ihk; porter).



Look for a sign with the word **ryegistratsiya** (ree-gee-*strah*-tsih-ye; check-in). That's where you report your arrival. Simply say **U myenya zabronirovan nomyer.** (oo mee-*nya* zuh-brah-*nee*-ruh-vuhn *noo*-meer; *Literally:* I have a room reserved.)

Expect to be asked **Kak vasha familiya?** (kahk *vah*-shuh fuh-*mee*-lee-ye; What is your last name?) Keep your passport ready — you need it for registration. To ask for your passport, the **ryegistrator** (ree-gee-*strah*-tuhr; receptionist) says: **Vash pasport** (vahsh *pahs*-puhrt; Your passport).



Beware: Your driver's license (be it Russian or foreign) isn't a valid ID in Russia. We suggest that you carry your passport with you at all times just in case.

The next step in registration is filling out the **ryegistratsionnaya kartochka** (ree-gee-struh-tsih-*oh*-nuh-ye *kahr*-tuhch-kuh; registration form). You hear **Zapolnitye, pozhalujsta, ryegistratsionnuyu kartochku.** (zuh-*pohl*-nee-tee, pah-*zhahl*-stuh, ree-gee-struh-tsih-*ohn*-noo-yu *kahr*-tuhch-koo; Fill out the registration form, please.) In most cases, this form requires you to provide the following information:

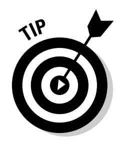
- **Imya** (*ee*-mye; first name)
- **Familiya** (fuh-*mee*-lee-ye; last name)
- **Adryes** (*ahd*-rees; address)
- **Domashnij/rabochij tyelefon** (dah-*mahsh*-neey/ruh-*boh*-cheey tee-lee-*fohn*; home/work phone number)
- **Srok pryebyvanya v gostinitsye s . . . po . . .** (srohk pree-bih-*vah*-nee-ye v gahs-*tee*-nee-tsih s . . . pah . . .; period of stay in the hotel from . . . to . . .)
- **Nomyer pasporta** (*noh*-meer *pahs*-puhr-tuh; passport number)

After you fill out all the forms and give the receptionist your passport, you receive the all-important **klyuch ot komnaty** (klyuch aht *kohm*-nuh-tih; the

key to your room) and your **kartochka gostya** (*kahr*-tuhch-kuh *gohs*-tye) or **visitka** (vee-*zeet*-kuh; hotel guest card).



Don't assume that your room number is related to the floor number. For example, if the **nomyer komnaty** (*noh*-meer *kohm*-nuh-tih; room number) is 235, it doesn't mean that the room is on the second floor; it can actually be on any floor of the hotel. Before you leave **registratsiya** (ree-gee-*strah*-tsih-ye; check-in), ask: **Na kakom etazhye moy nomyer?** (nuh kuh-*kohm* eh-tuh-*zheh* mohy *noh*-meer; On what floor is my room?)



Make sure you drop off your key with the reception desk each time you leave the hotel (and certainly pick it up when you come back). If you take your key with you, the administration of the hotel doesn't hold itself responsible for your personal belongings if anything of value left in your room mysteriously disappears.



Never leave the hotel without your **kartochka gostya** or **visitka** (hotel guest card) if you want to be let into the hotel when you come back after a long day of sightseeing. In most cases, the **visitka** (guest card) needs to be presented to the security officer that most Russian hotels are staffed with today.

Talkin' the Talk



Greg Brown has made a reservation for a hotel room in Yaroslavl' and is now checking in. Here is his conversation with the **ryegistrator** (receptionist).

Greg Brown: **U myenya zabronirovan nomyer na syegodnya.**
oo mee-*nya* zuh-brah-*nee*-ruh-vuhn *noh*-meer nuh see-*vohd*-nye.
I made a reservation for a room for today.

Ryegistrator: **Kak vasha familiya?**
kahk *vah*-shuh fuh-*mee*-lee-ye?
What is your last name?

Greg Brown: **Braun.**
brah-oon.
Brown.

Ryegistrator: **Greg Braun? Vash passport, pozhalujsta.**
grehg *brah*-oon? vahsh *pahs*-puhrt, pah-*zhahl*-stuh.
Greg Brown? Your passport, please.

Greg Brown: **Vot pozhaluysta.**
voht pah-*zhahl*-stuh.
Here it is.

Ryegistrator: **Zapolnitye, pozhalujsta, ryegistratsionnuyu kartochku.**
zuh-*pohl*-nee-tee, pah-*zhahl*-stuh, ree-gee-struh-tsih-*oh*-noo-yu *kahr*-tuhch-koo.
Please fill out the registration form.

Greg Brown: **Khorosho**.
khuh-rah-*shoh.*
Okay.
(Greg fills out the form and hands it to the receptionist.)
Vot, ya zapolnil.
voht ya zuh-*pohl*-neel.
Here, I filled it out.

Ryegistrator: **Vot vash kluch. Nomyer trista pyatnadtsat'. Vy vypisyvayetyes' vos'mogo? Rasschyotnyj chas dvyenadtsat' chasov dnya.**
voht vahsh klyuch. *noh*-meer *trees*-tuh peet-*naht*-tsuht'. vih vih-*pee*-sih-vuh-ee-tees' vahs'-*moh*-vuh? ruhs-*chyot*-nihy chahs dvee-*naht*-tsuht' chuh-*sohf* dnya.
Here is your key. You room number is 350. Are you checking out on the 8th? Check-out time is 12 p.m.

Words to Know

na syegodnya	nuh see-vohd-nye	for today
Vot pozhalujsta.	voht pah-zhahl-stuh	Here you are.
zapolnitye	zuh-pohl-nee-tee	fill out
Vot, ya zapolnil.	voht ya zuh-pohl-neel	Here, I filled it out.
Vot vash kluch.	voht vahsh klyuch	Here is your key.
Vy vypisyvayetyes' vos'mogo?	Vih vih-pee-sih-vuh-ee-tees' vahs'-moh-vuh	You are checking out on the 8th?
rasschyotnyj chas	ruhs-chyot-nihy chahs	check-out time

Taking a tour of your room

What can you expect to find in your hotel room? Most likely, you see a **dvukhspal'naya krovat'** (dvookh-*spahl'*-nuh-ye krah-*vaht'*; double bed) or an **odnospal'nya krovat'**(uhd-nah-*spahl'*-nuh-ye krah-*vaht'*; twin bed) if you have a **nomyer na odnogo** (*noh*-meer nuh uhd-nah-*voh*; single room).

You also probably see a **torshyer** (tahr-*shehr*; standing lamp) or maybe a few of them, **tumbochki** (*toom*-buhch-kee; night stands), and a **pis'myennyj stol i stul** (*pees'*-mee-nihy stohl ee stool; desk and a chair). In most Russian hotel rooms, you also find a **shkaf** (shkahf; wardrobe), with **vyeshalki** (*vye*-shuhl-kee; hangers). You may (or may not) have a **tyelyefon** (tee-lee-*fohn*; telephone), a **tyelyevizor** (tee-lee-*vee*-zuhr; TV set), a **budil'nik** (boo-*deel'*-neek; alarm clock), and a **tyelyefonnyj spravochnik** (tee-lee-*foh*-nihy *sprah*-vuhch-neek; phone book containing hotel numbers). Whether you find these items in your room depends on the quality of the hotel.

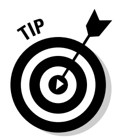
If you have a bathroom in your room, you find an **unitaz** (oo-nee-*tahs*; toilet), **dush** (doosh; shower) or **vannaya** (*vah*-nuh-ye; bathtub). Check to make sure you have all the **polotyentsa** (puh-lah-*tyen*-tsuh; towels). Don't expect to see towels of various sizes in the bathroom of your hotel room. In the best case scenario, you find two kinds of towels: **vannoye polotyentsye** (*vah*-nuh-ee puh-lah-*tyen*-tseh; bath towel) and a smaller **lichnoye polotyentsye** (leech-*noh*-ee puh-lah-*tyen*-tseh; face towel).

Familiarizing yourself with the facilities

To idle away time in the hotel, you may want to explore. Here's what you may find:

- **gardyerob** (guhr-dee-*rohp*; cloak room)
- **pochta** (*pohch*-tuh; post office)
- **suvyenirnyj kiosk** (soo-vee-*neer*-nihy kee-*ohsk*; souvenir kiosk)
- **kamyera khranyeniya** (*kah*-mee-ruh khruh-*nye*-nee-ye; store room)
- **byuro obsluzhivaniya** (byu-*roh* ahp-*sloo*-zhih-vuh-nee-ye; customer service)
- **ryestoran** (rees-tah-*rahn*; restaurant)
- **bahr** (bahr; bar)

To inquire where a certain service is, go to the **byuro obsluzhivaniya** and say: **Skazhitye, pozhalujsta, gdye kamyera khranyeniya/pochta?** (skuh-*zhih*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh gdye *kah*-mee-ruh khruh-*nye*-nee-ee/*pohch*-tuh; Could you tell me where the store room/post office is?)



If you aren't staying in the hotel, but are just visiting somebody or having lunch in one of the hotel bars or restaurants, leaving your coat and hat in **gardyerob** (cloak room) is customary.

Meeting the staff



People who work in the earlier-mentioned facilities and other hotel services you want to know include the following:

- **administrator** (uhd-mee-nee-*strah*-tuhr; manager, person working at the front desk, or concierge)
- **gardyerobsh'ik/gardyerobsh'tsa** (guhr-dee-*rohp*-sh'eek/guhr-dee-*rohp*-sh'ee-tsuh; a person working in the cloak room)
- **nosil'sh'ik** (nah-*seel'*-sh'eek; porter)
- **shvyejtsar** (shvyey-*tsahr*; doorman)
- **gornichnaya** (*gohr*-neech-nuh-ye; maid)

Resolving Service Problems Successfully

Experienced travelers know that something always goes wrong when staying in a foreign country. In the following sections, we show you how to resolve some of the most common problems, such as reporting a broken item, asking for missing items, and requesting to change rooms.

Reporting a broken item

A very common problem is when something in your room isn't working. The key refuses to open the door, the phone is silent when you pick it up, or the shower pours only cold water on you. You need to speak to a **robotnik** (ruh-*boht*-neek; employee) in the **byuro obsluzhivaniya** (byu-*roh* ahp-*sloo*-zhih-vuh-nee-ye; customer service) to get help for these problems.



To report the problem, use the phrase **U myenya v komnatye nye rabotayet . . .** (oo mee-*nya* f *kohm*-nuh-tee nee ruh-*boh*-tuh-eet; The . . . in my room is not working) + the item that's not working. If your telephone is broken, for instance, you say **U myenya v komnatye nye rabotayet tyelyefon** (oo mee-*nya* f *kohm*-nuh-tee nee ruh-*boh*-tuh-eet tee-lee-*fohn*; The telephone in my room is not working). You put the word for the broken item into the nominative case.

Requesting missing items



The formula you need to know to report that something is missing is: **U myenya v nomyere nyet** (oo-mee-*nya* v *noh*-mee-ree nyet; In my room I don't have a) + the word denoting a missing thing in the genitive case. (For more information on forming the genitive case, see Chapter 2.)

Imagine that you've just taken a shower and are now reaching for the **vannoye polotyentsye** (*vah*-nuh-ee puh-lah-*tyen*-tseh; bath towel) only to discover you don't have one! Shivering from cold and dripping water from your freshly showered body, you rush to the phone to call customer service. You say: **U myenya v nomyerye nyet vannogo polotyentsa** (oo mee-*nya* v *noh*-mee-ree nyet *vah*-nuh-vuh puh-lah-*tyen*-tsuh; I don't have a bath towel in my room). Other things that you may request include

- **podushka** (pah-*doosh*-kuh; pillow)
- **odyeyalo** (ahd'-*ya*-luh; blanket)
- **vyeshalka** (*vye*-shuhl-kuh; hanger)
- **tualyetnaya bumaga** (too-uh-*lyet*-nuh-ye boo-*mah*-guh; toilet paper)

Asking to change rooms



To be honest, changing rooms isn't the easiest thing to do in a Russian hotel, but as they say in Russian: **Popytka nye pytka!** (pah-*piht*-kuh nee *piht*-kuh; It doesn't hurt to try!, *Literally:* An attempt is not a torture!) You should call customer service and say **Ya khotyel/khotyela by pomyenyat' nomyer** (ya khah-*tyel*/khah-*tye*-luh bih puh-mee-*nyat' noh*-meer; I would like to change my room). You say **khotyel** if you're a man and **khotyela** if you're a woman. And you need to give some convincing reasons for wanting to do so, such as:

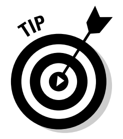
- **V komnatye ochyen' shumno** (f *kohm*-nuh-tee *oh*-cheen' *shoom*-nuh; It is very noisy in my room).
- **V komnatye ochyen' kholodno/zharko** (f *kohm*-nuh-tee *oh*-cheen' *khoh*-luhd-nuh/*zhahr*-kuh; It is very cold/hot in my room).
- **V komnatye nyet svyeta** (f *kohm*-nuh-tee nyet *svye*-tuh; There is no light in my room).

Checking Out and Paying Your Bill

Your stay has come to an end, and now you have to pay. Or as Russians like to say: **Nastupil chas rassplaty** (nuh-stoo-*peel* chahs ruhs-*plah*-tih; It's time to pay, *Literally:* The hour of reckoning has arrived). In order to **zaplatit' za gostinitsu**

(zuh-pluh-*teet'* zuh gahs-*tee*-nee-tsoo; to pay for your hotel stay), you go to **ryegistratsiya** (ree-gee-*strah*-tsih-ye; check-in) and say **Ya vypisyvayus'. Ya khochu zaplatit'.** (ya vih-*pee*-sih-vuh-yus' ya khah-*choo* zuh-pluh-*teet'*; I am checking out. I want to pay for my stay.) Also ask **Vy prinimayetye kryedit-nyye kartochki?** (vih pree-nee-*mah*-ee-tee kree-*deet*-nih-ee *kahr*-tuhch-kee; Do you accept credit cards?) If the hotel does, inquire **Kakiye kryeditnyye kar-tochnki vy prinimayetye?** (kuh-*kee*-ee kree-*deet*-nih-ee *kahr*-tuhch-kee vih pree-nee-*mah*-ee-tee; What credit cards do you take?)

See to it that everything is correct in your receipt. It may include a **tyelyefon-nyj razgovor** (tee-lee-*foh*-nihy ruhz-gah-*vohr*; telephone call) you made from your room, or maybe **stirka** (*steer*-kuh; laundry service). If you feel that you're overcharged for some service you didn't use, point it out to the receptionist and ask politely: **A eto za chto?** (uh *eh*-tuh zah shtoh; And what is this for?) And don't forget to **poluchit' kvitantsiyu** (puh-loo-*cheet'* kvee-*tahn*-tsih-yu; to get a receipt) before you hurry out of the hotel to catch your train or plane.



As in most hotels throughout the world, the **rasschyotnyj chas** (ruhs-*chyot*-nihy chahs; check-out time) is **poldyen'** (*pohl*-deen'; noon) or **dvyenadtsat' chasov dnya** (dvee-*naht*-tsuht' chuh-*sohf* dnya; 12 p.m). So where do you put your luggage if your plane doesn't leave until midnight? Most hotels have a **kamyera khranyeniya** (*kah*-mee-ruh khruh-*nye*-nee-ye; store room).



Fun & Games

Select the appropriate response for the following phrases; the answers are in Appendix C.

1. **Odnomyestnyj nomyer ili dvukhmyestnyj?**

   a. **Odnomyestnyj nomyer, pozhalujsta.**

   b. **Ya khochu zaplatit'.**

   c. **Gdye gardyerob?**

2. **Ya khotyela by zabronirovat' nomyer.**

   a. **Vy nye skazhyetye, gdye pochta?**

   b. **Na kakoye chislo?**

   c. **U myenya nye rabotayet tyelyefon.**

3. **Zdravstvujtye. U menya zabronirovan nomyer.**

   a. **Vot klyuch ot nomyera.**

   b. **U myenya v nomyere nyet polotyentsa.**

   c. **Kak vasha familiya?**

Using the information in the right-hand column, help John Evans fill out his hotel registration form in the left column. See Appendix C for the right answers.

imya ____________________	Evans
familiya ______________________	John
adryes ____________________	815/555-5544
domashnij tyelyefon _________________	123 Highpoint Drive, Chicago, USA

Put these phrases from a conversation in logical order. See Appendix C for the correct answers.

a. **Moya familiya Ivanov.**

b. **U myenya zabronirovan nomyer.**

c. **Zapolnitye ryegistratsionnuyu kartochku.**

d. **Kak vasha familiya?**

Chapter 14

Money, Money, Money

In This Chapter

- Deciphering different currencies
- Exchanging your money
- Dealing with banks
- Making payments

What do traveling, shopping, dining, going out, and moving into a new place all have in common? They all require **dyen'gi** (*dyen'*-gee; money). This chapter takes you on a tour of the Russian monetary business. You find out about Russian currency and where to find it. You also discover phrases to use at the bank and while making payments. It pays to be prepared!

Paying Attention to Currency

In spite of ubiquitous dollar signs in fancy restaurant menus and "for rent" ads, the official Russian currency is not the U.S. dollar. In the following sections, you discover the names and denominations of Russian and international forms of money.

Rubles and kopecks

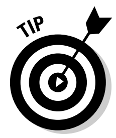


The official Russian currency is the **rubl'** (roobl'; ruble). Much like a dollar equals one hundred cents, one **rubl'** equals one hundred **kopyejki** (kah-*pyey*-kee; kopecks).



How a kopeck saved a ruble

Although Russians take pride in being extravagant with money, a Russian proverb teaches us otherwise: **Kopyejka rubl' byeryezhyot** (kah-*pyey*-kuh roobl' bee-ree-*zhoht*; A kopeck saves a ruble). Apparently, Russian folk wisdom fully agrees with the familiar "Take care of your pennies, and pounds will take care of themselves." In other words, being careful with little sums of money leads to big savings.



Kopyejki are a thing of the past now. With prices these days, nobody bothers with **kopyejki,** and they don't even appear in prices anymore.

To talk about different numbers of rubles, you need to use different cases, such as **dva rublya** (dvah roob-*lya*; two rubles) in the genitive singular, **pyat' rublyej** (pyat' roob-*lyey*; five rubles) in the genitive plural, and **dvadtsat' odin rubl'** (*dvaht*-tsuht' ah-*deen* roobl'; twenty-one rubles) in the nominative singular. For more info on numbers followed by nouns, see Chapter 2.



Before the Soviet revolution, the Russian ruble was one of the most respected currencies in Europe. Now, even Russians don't respect their currency too much. They sometimes call the ruble **dyeryevyannyj** (dee-ree-*vya*-nihy; *Literally:* wooden). Another derogatory term to refer to Russian **dyen'gi** (*dyen'*-gee; money) is **kapusta** (kuh-*poos*-tuh; *Literally:* cabbage). American dollars, on the other hand, are admirably referred to as **zyelyonyye** (zee-*lyo*-nih-ee; *Literally:* green).

Dollars, euros, and other international currencies



Although the official Russian currency is the ruble, some foreign currencies such as U.S. dollars and European euros are widely used. Although it's always better to have some rubles on you, you may be able to pay for an occasional cab ride with U.S. dollars or euros. Be careful, though: These currencies are the only two types of foreign currency that you can use in Russia. By and large, Russians aren't familiar with the way other currencies look and won't accept payment in unfamiliar-looking money. All other currencies have to be exchanged for rubles.

Here's a list of foreign currencies that you may need to exchange:

- **dollar YuS** (*doh*-luhr yu-*ehs;* U.S. dollar)
- **kanadskij dollar** (kuh-*nahts*-keey *doh*-luhr; Canadian dollar)
- **avstralijskij dollar** (uhf-struh-*leey*-skeey *doh*-luhr; Australian dollar)
- **yevro** (*yev*-ruh; euros)
- **funt styerlingov** (foont *stehr*-leen-guhf; British pound)
- **yaponskaya yena** (ee-*pohns*-kuh-ye *ye*-nuh; Japanese yen)

Changing Money

American dollars may be sufficient to take you to your hotel from the airport (at the risk of severe overpayment). After that, however, you have to jump into the "ruble zone." Big Russian cities are saturated with **punkty obmyena** (*poonk*-tih ahb-*mye*-nuh; currency exchange offices), which can also be called **obmyen valyut** (ahb-*myen* vuh-*lyut*). You can usually find a **punkt obmyena** in any hotel. The best **kurs obmyena valyut** (koors ahb-*mye*-nuh vuh-*lyut*; exchange rate), however, is offered by **banki** (*bahn*-kee; banks).



You may not get a fair exchange with street "currency exchangers." Although they may offer seductively profitable exchange rates, they offer no guarantee that what you receive in the end are, in fact, real Russian rubles. Unless you like living dangerously and Risk is your middle name, you're better off using a **bank** or **punkt obmyena.**

Some handy phrases to use when you exchange currency include

- **Ya khochu obmyenyat' dyen'gi.** (ya khah-*choo* uhb-mee-*nyat' dyen'*-gee; I want to exchange money.)
- **Ya khochu obmyenyat' dollary na rubli.** (ya khah-*choo* uhb-mee-*nyat' doh*-luh-rih nuh roob-*lee*; I want to exchange dollars for rubles.)
- **Kakoj kurs obmyena?** (kuh-*kohy* koors ahb-*mye*-nuh; What is the exchange rate?)
- **Nado platit' komissiyu?** (*nah*-duh pluh-*teet'* kah-*mee*-see-yu; Do I have to pay a fee?)



Most of the exchange offices require some kind of identification to allow you to exchange money; showing your passport is the safest bet.



Visiting a currency exchange office is a pretty good indicator that you have cash on you. This fact has long been known by **karmanniki** (kuhr-*mah*-nee-kee; pickpockets), who hang out by exchange office entrances and follow prospective victims after they leave the office. To avoid their unflattering attention, count your money and put it away before you step outside.

Talkin' the Talk



Jim stops by a bank to exchange dollars for rubles. He is asking the **rabotnik banka** (ruh-**boht**-neek **bahn**-kuh; bank employee) a couple of questions.

Jim: **U vas mozhno obmyenyat' dollary na rubli?**
oo vahs *mohzh*-nuh uhb-mee-*nyat' doh*-luh-rih nuh roob-*lee*?
Can I exchange dollars for rubles here?

Rabotnik banka: **Da. Kurs obmyena — odin k tridtsati.**
dah. koors ahb-*mye*-nuh — ah-*deen* k tree-tsuh-*tee*.
Yes. Exchange rate is one for thirty.

Jim: **Ya khochu obmyenyat' sorok dollarov.**
ya khah-*choo* uhb-mee-*nyat' soh*-ruhk *doh*-luh-ruhf.
I would like to exchange forty dollars.

Rabotnik banka: **Izvinitye, eto nyevozmozhno. Minimal'naya summa obmyena — sto dollarov.**
eez-vee-*nee*-tee, *eh*-tuh nee-vahz-*mohzh*-nuh. mee-nee-*mahl'*-nuh-ye *soo*-muh ahb-*mye*-nuh — stoh *doh*-luh-ruhf.
I am sorry, but that's impossible. The minimum sum for exchange is one hundred dollars.

Words to Know

U vas mozhno obmyenyat' dollary na rubli?	oo vahs mohzh-nuh uhb-mee-nyat' doh-luh-rih nuh roob-lee	Can I exchange dollars for rubles here?
odin k tridtsati	ah-deen k tree-tsuh-tee	one for thirty
Ya khochu obmyenyat' sorok dollarov.	ya khah-choo uhb-mee-nyat' soh-ruhk doh-luh-ruhf	I would like to exchange forty dollars.
Eto nyevozmozhno.	eh-tuh nee-vahz-mohzh-nuh	That's impossible.
minimal'naya summa	mee-nee-mahl'-nuh-ye soo-muh	minimum sum

Using Banks

Opening a bank account is a useful thing to do if you want to have payments deposited directly to your account, make money transfers easier, or get rid of the nerve-wracking obligation to think of your cash's safety. The following sections show you how to open and manage your bank account in Russian.

Opening an account at the bank of your choice



The first thing you need to do is decide on the type of bank you want to work with: Do you prefer a **kommyerchyeskij bank** (kah-*myer*-chees-keey bahnk; commercial bank) or **gosbank** (gohs-*bahnk*), which stands for **gosudarstvyennyj bank** (guh-soo-*dahr*-stvee-nihy bahnk; state bank)? Another way to refer to the **gosbank** is **sbyeryegatyel'naya kassa** (sbee-ree-*gah*-teel'-nuh-ye *kah*-suh); that's the phrase that you usually see on building facades. A privately owned **kommyerchyeskij bank** offers a much better **protsyent** (prah-*tsehnt*; interest rate).



In spite of a better interest rate offered by **kommyerchyeskiye banki** (kah-*myer*-chees-kee-ee *bahn*-kee; commercial banks), most Russians prefer to use a **gosbank.** During the numerous economic crises in Russia's recent history, **kommyerchyeskiye banki** closed and disappeared in the blink of an eye. But

if you decide to go with a **gosbank,** be prepared to face a long **ochyeryed'** (*oh*-chee-reet'; line).

Your next decision concerns the type of **schyot** (sh'oht; account) you want to open. Although **sbyeryegatyel'nyj** (sbee-ree-*gah*-teel'-nihy) literally translates as "savings," this type of **schyot** corresponds to "checking account." The accounts that involve a minimal term are called **srochnyye vklady** (*srohch*-nih-ee *fklah*-dih); they correspond to savings accounts. Also, students can open a **studyenchyeskij schyot** (stoo-*dyen*-chees-keey sh'oht; student account).

To open an account, you need to talk to a **rabotnik banka** (ruh-*boht*-neek *bahn*-kuh; bank employee). You simply say **Ya khochu otkryt' schyot** (ya khah-*choo* aht-*kriht'* sh'oht; I want to open an account). You'll need to **pokazat' pasport** (puh-kuh-*zaht' pahs*-puhrt; to show your passport) and to **zapolnit' zayavlyeniye** (zuh-*pohl*-neet' zuh-ee-*vlye*-nee-ee; to fill out forms). On a **zayavlyeniye,** you'll need to provide your **imya** (*ee*-mye; given name), **familiya** (fuh-*mee*-lee-ye; family name), **adryes** (*ahd*-rees; address), **nomyer pasporta** (*noh*-meer *pahs*-puhr-tuh; passport number), and the type of **schyot** (sh'oht; account) you want to open.

Talkin' the Talk



Laura is a student at Moscow State University. She decides to open an account with a Russian bank and talks to a **rabotnik banka** (ruh-*boht*-neek *bahn*-kuh; bank employee).

Laura: **Ya khotyela by otkryt' schyot u vas v bankye.**
ya khah-*tye*-luh bih aht-*kriht'* sh'oht oo vahs v *bahn*-kee.
I would like to open an account with your bank.

Rabotnik banka: **Pozhalujsta. Posmotritye etu broshyuru i vybyeritye, kakoj schyot vy khotitye otkryt'.**
pah-*zhahl*-stuh. puh-smah-*tree*-tee *eh*-too brah-*shoo*-roo ee *vih*-bee-ree-tee, kuh-*kohy* sh'oht vih khah-*tee*-tee aht-*kriht'*.
Here you go. Look at this booklet and choose the kind of account you would like to open.

Laura: **Mnye podkhodit studyenchyeskij sbyeryegatyel'nyj schyot. Mnye na nyego budut pyeryechislyat' stipyendiyu.**
mnye pahd-*khoh*-deet stoo-*dyen*-chees-keey sbee-ree-*gah*-teel'-nihy sh'oht. mnye nuh nee-*voh boo*-doot pee-ree-chees-*lyat'* stee-*pyen*-dee-yu.

	Student savings account suits me best. I'll have my fellowship deposited into it.
Rabotnik banka:	**Otlichno. Minimal'nyj vklad — dvyesti rublyej.** aht-*leech*-nuh. Mee-nee-*mahl'*-nihy fklaht — *dvyes*-tee roob-*lyey*. Great. The minimum deposit is two hundred rubles.

Words to Know

otkryt' schyot	aht-krihť sh'oht	to open an account
broshyura	brah-shoo-ruh	booklet
studyenchyeskij schyot	stoo-dyen-chees-keey sh'oht	student account
pyeryechislyat'	pee-ree-chees-lyat'	to deposit
minimal'nyj vklad	mee-nee-mahl'-nihy fklaht	minimum deposit

Making deposits and withdrawals



You have several ways to **sdyelat' vklad** (*sdye*-luht' fklaht; to deposit money) into your account:

- **klast' dyen'gi na schyot** (klahst' *dyen'*-gee nuh sh'oht; to deposit money directly at the bank or ATM, *Literally:* to put money into an account)
- **pyeryechislyat' dyen'gi na schyot** (pee-ree-chees-*lyat' dyen'*-gee nuh sh'oht; to deposit money into an account)
- **pyeryevodit' dyen'gi na schyot** (pee-ree-vah-*deet' dyen'*-gee nuh sh'oht; to transfer money from a different account or have it deposited by a third party, *Literally:* to transfer money to an account)
- **poluchat' pyeryevod** (puh-loo-*chaht'* pee-ree-*voht*; to have money wired to your account, *Literally:* to receive a transfer)



The imperfective verb **klast'** (klahst'; to put) has the perfective pair **polozhit'** (puh-lah-*zhih'*). Because the two verbs sound nothing like each other, and the frequency of their usage in conversation is so high, a good number of native speakers of Russian attempt to form the imperfective from **polozhit'** and use it in conversation. You may hear it a lot, but don't be tempted to pick it up; this form is both the most common and the most frowned upon grammatical mistake made by Russians themselves. (For more information on imperfective and perfective verbs, see Chapter 2.)

When filling out deposit slips, you're asked for the **summa vklada** (*soo*-muh *fklah*-duh; deposit amount) and **nomyer schyota** (*noh*-meer *sh'oh*-tuh; account number).

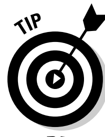
Now that you have some money in your account, you can:

- **snyat' dyen'gi so schyota** (snyat' *dyen'*-gee sah *sh'oh*-tuh; withdraw money from an account)
- **pyeryevyesti dyen'gi na drugoj schyot** (pee-ree-vees-*tee dyen'*-gee nuh droo-*gohy* sh'oht; transfer money to a different account)
- **poslat' dyenyezhnyj pyeryevod** (pahs-*laht' dyen*-neezh-nihy pee-ree-*voht*; to wire money, *Literally:* to send a money transfer)

And, finally, if you no longer need your bank account, you can just **zakryt' schyot** (zuhk-*riht'* sh'oht; to close the account).

Heading to the ATM

The fastest way to access your account is the **bankomat** (buhn-kah-*maht*; ATM). **Bankomaty** (buhn-kah-*mah*-tih; ATMs) are less ubiquitous in small cities; they're usually found in banks. Remember that you have to pay a **komissiya** (kah-*mee*-see-ye; ATM fee) each time you use a **bankomat** that belongs to a bank other than your own. The **komissiya** is usually 1.5 percent of the sum you're withdrawing, but no less than $3–$6 depending on the type of card. So, it probably makes sense to withdraw larger sums of money to avoid numerous **komissii** (kah-*mee*-see-ee; commissions) for smaller withdrawals.



Before inserting your card, make sure that the **logotip** (luh-gah-*teep*; symbol) of the card you're about to use (such as Visa or American Express) is on the **bankomat.** Otherwise, the **bankomat** may not recognize the card and may even swallow it for security purposes.



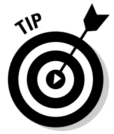
Here's your guide to the phrases you see on the **bankomat** screen:

- **vstav'tye kartu** (*fstahf'*-tee *kahr*-too; insert the card)
- **vvyeditye PIN-kod** (vee-*dee*-tee peen-*koht*; enter your PIN)
- **vvyeditye summu** (vee-*dee*-tee *soo*-moo; enter the amount)

- **snyat' nalichnyye** (snyat' nuh-*leech*-nih-ee; withdraw cash)
- **kvitantsiya** (kvee-*tahn*-tsih-ye; receipt)
- **zabyeritye kartu** (zuh-bee-*ree*-tee *kahr*-too; remove the card)

Spending Money

And now, on to the fun part! The best thing about money is spending it. In the following sections, discover what to do and what to say while making payments two different ways: by cash or using a credit card. You also find out where to find great bargains.



Before you run out and spend your money, you may find it helpful to know the verb **platit'** (pluh-*teet'*; to pay). Its conjugation appears in Table 14-1.

Table 14-1 Conjugation of Platit'

Conjugation	*Pronunciation*	*Translation*
ya plachu	ya pluh-*choo*	I pay or I am paying
ty platish'	tih *plah*-teesh'	You pay or You are paying (informal singular)
on/ona/ono platit	ohn/ah-*nah*/ah-*noh* *plah*-teet	He/she/it pays or He/she/it is paying
my platim	mih *plah*-teem	We pay or We are paying
vy platitye	vih *plah*-tee-tee	You pay or You are paying (formal singular and plural)
oni platyat	ah-*nee* *plah*-tyet	They pay or They are paying

Finding great deals



At one time, travel in Eastern Europe was dirt cheap, which made it a perfect vacation spot for adventure-seeking college students. Well, no more; at least, not in Russia. Today, according to some polls, Moscow rates as the second most expensive city in the world. So, beware! Look out for these signs to cut down on your expenses:

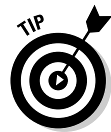
- **rasprodazha** (ruhs-prah-*dah*-zhuh; sale)
- **skidka** (*skeet*-kuh; discount)
- **nyedorogo** (nee-*doh*-ruh-guh; inexpensive)

Another way to avoid sky-rocketing Moscow prices is to shop **na rynkye** (nuh *rihn*-kee; at the open market) rather than **v supyermarkyetye** (f soo-peer-*mahr*-kee-tee; at a supermarket), and of course, don't forget to **torgovat'sya** (tuhr-gah-*vah*-tseh; to bargain)!



To inquire about the price of any item, ask **Skol'ko stoit . . . ?** (*skohl'*-kuh *stoh*-eet?; How much does . . . cost?) After you hear the price, you may want to specify your question to avoid the confusion:

- **Za kilogram?** (zuh kee-lahg-*rahm*; Per kilo?)
- **Za shtuku?** (zuh *shtoo*-koo; Per item?)
- **Za yash'ik?** (zuh *ya*-sh'eek; Per box?)



When you're buying several items or paying for your meal at a restaurant, a good phrase to use is **Skol'ko s myenya?** (*skohl'*-kuh s mee-*nya*; How much do I owe?)

For more information on inquiring about prices and paying for items, see Chapter 6.

Using cash

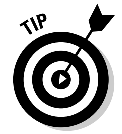


Nalichnyye (nuh-*leech*-nih-ee; cash) is still widely used in Russia. Many stores and ticket offices accept cash only, as do such places as the **rynok** (*rih*-nuhk; market) or a small **kafe** (kuh-*feh*; café). The general rule of thumb is the following: The fancier and more expensive the place is, the higher the chances that you're able to pay with a credit card (see the following section). Otherwise, prepare a stack of those rubles before you head out! To find out whether you can pay with cash, ask **U vas mozhno zaplatit' nalichnymi?** (oo vahs *mohzh*-nuh zuh-pluh-*teet'* nuh-*leech*-nih-mee; Can I pay with cash here?)

Russian rubles come both in **kupyury** (koo-*pyu*-rih; bills) and **monyety** (mah-*nye*-tih; coins). Kopecks always come in coins, but they're virtually extinct now (see "Rubles and kopecks" earlier in this chapter for more info). Here's a list of Russian bills and coins in use (so you know to be a little suspicious if you receive change in 15-ruble bills and 25-kopeck coins):

- **kupyury** (koo-*pyu*-rih; bills)
    - **dyesyat' rublyej** (*dye*-seet' roob-*lyey*; ten rubles)
    - **pyat'dyesyat rublyej** (pee-dee-*syat* roob-*lyey*; fifty rubles)
    - **sto rublyej** (stoh roob-*lyey*; one hundred rubles)
    - **pyat'sot rublyej** (peet'-*soht* roob-*lyey;* five hundred rubles)
    - **tysyacha rublyej** *(tih*-see-chuh roob-*lyey*; one thousand rubles)

- **monyety** (mah-*nye*-tih; coins):
  - **odna kopyejka** (ahd-*nah* kah-*pyey*-kuh; one kopeck)
  - **pyat' kopyeyek** (pyat' kah-*pye*-eek; five kopecks)
  - **dyesyat' kopyeyek** (*dye*-seet' kah-*pye*-eek; ten kopecks)
  - **pyat'dyesyat kopyeyek** (pee-dee-*syat* kah-*pye*-eek; fifty kopecks)
  - **odin rubl'** (ah-*deen* roobl'; one ruble)
  - **dva rublya** (dvah roob-*lya*; two rubles)
  - **pyat' rublyej** (pyat' roob-*lyey*; five rubles)



When paying **nalichnymi** (nuh-*leech*-nih-mee; with cash) in Russia, putting money into the other person's hand isn't customary. Instead, you're supposed to put the cash into a little plate usually found on the counter.

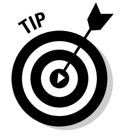


Traveler's checks may seem like a convenient way to transport money, but not in Russia. There, you may have a really hard time finding a place to exchange them. Russian doesn't even have an equivalent for "traveler's checks"; in those few places where they're recognized, they're referred to in English.

Paying with credit cards



Although **kryeditnyye kartochki** (kree-*deet*-nih-ee *kahr*-tuhch-kee; credit cards) and **bankovskiye kartochki** (*bahn*-kuhf-skee-ee *kahr*-tuhch-kee; debit cards) have long been established in cities like Moscow and St. Petersburg, in other cities your attempts to pay with a credit card may not be as welcome. When making plans to pay with a credit card, it's worth asking **U vas mozhno zaplatit' kryeditnoj kartochkoj?** (oo vahs *mohzh*-nuh zuh-pluh-*teet'* kree-*deet*-nuhy *kahr*-tuhch-kuhy; Can I pay with a credit card here?) or **Ya mogu zaplatit' kryeditnoj kartochkoj?** (ya mah-*goo* zuh-pluh-*teet'* kree-*deet*-nuhy *kahr*-tuhch-kuhy; Can I pay with a credit card?)



Some places, such as travel agencies, may charge you a fee when accepting payment by credit card. To find out where this is the case, you may want to ask **Vy vzymayetye komissionnyj sbor za oplatu kryeditnoj kartochkoj?** (vih vzih-*mah*-ee-tee kuh-mee-see-*oh*-nihy zbohr zuh ahp-*lah*-too kree-*deet*-nuhy *kahr*-tuhch-kuhy; Do you charge a fee for paying with a credit card?)



Fun & Games

Match these money-related activities in the left column with places where they are appropriate from the right column. Find the answers in Appendix C.

1. **Otkryt′ schyot.**	a. **rynok**
2. **Obmyenyat′ dollary.**	b. **bankomat**
3. **Vvyesti PIN-kod.**	c. **bank**
4. **Platit′ nalichnymi.**	d. **obmyennyj punkt**

The following are descriptions of your interaction with a Russian bank. Put them in chronological order (see Appendix C for the answers):

a. **sdyelat′ vklad**

b. **zakryt′ schyot**

c. **otkryt′ schyot**

Tom and Mickey go shopping. Each of them has a different means of payment on him: Tom has a credit card and Mickey has cash. Decide which of the following questions each friend is likely to ask before making his payment. (Appendix C has the answers.)

1. **Ya mogu zaplatit′ kryeditnoj kartochkoj?**
2. **U vas mozhno zaplatit′ nalichnymi?**

Chapter 15

Where Is Red Square? Asking Directions

In This Chapter

- Using "where" and "how"
- Receiving precise directions
- Discussing distances

For a traveler, asking for directions (and understanding them) is an indispensable skill. In this chapter we give you the words and phrases you need when asking how to get to your destination and not get lost in the process. As exciting as it may be, being lost in a strange city can be scary and may even create panic. To avoid experiencing these unpleasant sensations, carefully read this chapter.

Asking "Where" and "How" Questions

When in doubt, just ask! In Russia, most passers-by, who at first may seem to be preoccupied with their own business, are actually very happy to help you. As a matter of fact, you may even be doing them a favor by distracting their attention from their routine duties and sometimes unhappy thoughts. In the following sections you discover how to ask for directions with two simple words: "where" and "how."

Where is it?



Russian uses two words to translate the English "where" — **gdye** (gdye; where) or **kuda** (koo-*dah*; where). But you can't use the two words interchangeably. The following is what you need to know about these words:

- If "where" indicates *location* rather than direction of movement and you aren't using the so-called verbs of motion (to go, to walk, to drive, and so on), use the word **gdye** (where).
- If "where" indicates *direction* of movement rather than location, or in other words is used in a sentence with verbs of motion (to go, to walk, to drive, and so on), use the word **kuda** (where).



When we say "verbs of motion," we mean all kinds of motion: going, walking, running, jogging, swimming, rowing, crawling, climbing, getting to . . . in other words, any verb associated with motion. For more info on verbs of motion, see Chapter 12.

Imagine you're looking for the nearest bus stop to get to a museum that's first on the list of places you want to see in a certain city. Here you are, helplessly standing on the corner of a crowded street and looking for a person with the friendliest expression to approach with your question. This young woman seems nice. Why not ask her?

Hold on! What exactly do you intend to ask her? If you're planning to ask "Where is the nearest bus stop?" think first how you're going to translate the word "where." Are you inquiring about location or destination here? Obviously, your question is about location — the location of the bus stop. Go back to the rule we just provided you. In a sentence or question asking about location, you use **gdye** (where). Now you can go ahead and ask your question:

> **Gdye blizhayshaya ostanovka avtobusa?** (gdye blee-*zhahy*-shuh-ye uhs-tuh-*nohf*-kuh uhf-*toh*-boo-suh; Where is the nearest bus stop?)



Did you notice that you don't have translate the verb "is" here and that the phrase indicating what you're looking for — the bus stop, in this case — is in the nominative case?

Look at another example. This time you're looking for a library. This is what you say in Russian:

> **Gdye bibliotyeka?** (gdye beeb-lee-ah-*tye*-kuh; Where is the library?)

Now, imagine a slightly different situation. You're at the bus station. A bus has just arrived and you want to know where it's going. The best person to ask is probably the driver himself: He should know where the bus is headed, even if today is his first day on the job. Before you ask your question, think first how you're going to begin it: with **gdye** (where) or with **kuda** (where)? Is your question "Where is the bus going?" about location or destination? Yes, you're asking a question about the destination! Go back to the earlier rules: If the main point of your question is destination, you should use the word **kuda** (where). Here's your question:

> **Kuda idyot etot avtobus?** (koo-*dah* ee-*dyot eh*-tuht uhf-*toh*-boos; Where is this bus going?)

To construct this question, you simply use **kuda,** the verb "is going" (**idyot,** in this example — see Chapter 12 for details), and the noun in the nominative case. No need to change it into another case!

How do I get there?



You're standing at the corner of a crowded street, and a young woman is passing by. You want to ask her how you can get to the **muzyyej** (moo-*zyey*; museum) you planned to see today. To ask this question, you need the verb **popast'** (pah-*pahst'*; to get to). This verb, too, belongs to the category of verbs of motion (see the previous section). The phrase "How do I get to" is **Kak ya ostyuda mogu popast' v.** The following is what you want to ask:

> **Kak ya otsyuda mogu popast' v muzyej?** (kahk ya aht-*syu*-duh mah-*goo* pah-*pahst'* v moo-*zyey*; How do I get to the museum from here?)

Or you may want to make your question more impersonal by saying **Kak otsyuda mozhno popast' v** (How does one get to):

> **Kak otsyuda mozhno popast' v muzyej?** (kaht aht-*syu*-duh *mohzh*-nuh pah-*pahst'* v moo-*zyey*; How does one get to the museum from here?)



Russian uses the same prepositions, **v**/**na,** to express both "to (a place)" and "in/at (a place)." When you use **v**/**na** to indicate movement, the noun indicating the place of destination takes the accusative case. If **v**/**na** is used to denote location, the noun denoting location is used in prepositional case. (For more on cases, see Chapter 2.) Compare these two sentences:

- **Ya idu v bibliotyeku** (ya ee-*doo* v beeb-lee-ah-*tye*-koo; I am going to the library)
- **Ya v bibliotyekye** (ya v beeb-lee-ah-*tye*-kee; I am at the library)

In the first example, the noun **bibliotyeka** (beeb-lee-ah-*tye*-kuh; library) is used in the accusative case because the main message of the sentence is to indicate destination, but in the second example, the noun is in the prepositional case to denote location.



At this point you may be asking: When do you use **na** and when do you use **v?** The choice of the preposition depends on the noun it's used with. With most nouns, Russian speakers use **v.** But a number of nouns, such as those in the following list, require **na** (you just need to remember them). Note that the word after **na** in the first phrase is in the accusative case and the word after **na** in the second phrase is in the prepositional case:

- **na lyektsiyu/na lyektsii** (nuh *lyek*-tsih-yu/nuh *lyek*-tsih-ee; to a lecture/at a lecture)

- **na stadion/na stadionye** (nuh stuh-dee-*ohn*/nuh stuh-dee-*oh*-nee; to a stadium/at a stadium)
- **na stantsiyu/na stantsiye** (nuh *stahn*-tsih-yu/nuh *stahn*-tsih-ee; to a station/at a station)
- **na syeminar/na syeminarye** (nuh see-mee-*nahr*/nuh see-mee-*nah*-ree; to a seminar/at a seminar)
- **na urok/na urokye** (nuh oo-*rohk*/nuh oo-*roh*-kee; to a class/at a class)
- **na vokzal/na vokzalye** (nuh vahk-*zahl*/nuh vahk-*zah*-lee; to a railway station/at a railway station)
- **na zavod/na zavodye** (nuh zuh-*voht*/nuh zuh-*voh*-dee; to a plant/at a plant)

Understanding Specific Directions

When you're done asking for directions, it's important to understand what you're being told. In the following sections, you find out about prepositions and other words people use when talking about directions in Russian.

Recognizing prepositions

REMEMBER

When people describe the location of something, they often use prepositions that you want to recognize in order to understand the directions given to you:

- **okolo** (*oh*-kuh-luh; near) + a noun in the genitive case
- **ryadom s** (*rya*-duhm s; next to) + a noun in the instrumental case
- **naprotiv** (nuh-*proh*-teef; opposite, across from) + a noun in the genitive case
- **za** (zah; behind, beyond) + a noun in the instrumental case
- **pozadi** (puh-zuh-*dee*; behind) + a noun in the genitive case
- **pyered** (*pye*-reet; in front of) + a noun in the instrumental case
- **myezhdu** (*myezh*-doo; between) + a noun in the instrumental case
- **vnutri** (vnoo-*tree*; inside) + a noun in the genitive case
- **snaruzhi** (snuh-*roo*-zhih; outside) + a noun in the genitive case
- **nad** (naht; above) + a noun in the instrumental case
- **pod** (poht; below) + a noun in the instrumental case

When you ask a simple question like **Gdye muzyej?** (gdye moo-*zyey*; Where is the museum?), you'll likely hear a response like:

> **Muzyej ryadom s tyeatrom, za magazinom, myezhdu aptyekoj i pochtoj, pozadi pamyatnika, naprotiv univyermaga.** (moo-*zyey rya*-duhm s tee-*aht*-ruhm, zuh muh-guh-*zee*-nuhm, *myezh*-doo uhp-*tye*-kuhy ee *pohch*-tuhy, puh-zuh-*dee pah*-meet-nee-kuh, nuh-*proh*-teef oo-nee-veer-*mah*-guh; The museum is next to the theater, beyond the store, between the pharmacy and the post office, behind the monument, opposite the department store.)



Note that each of the previously listed prepositions requires a different case for the noun or phrase following it. For more info on cases, see Chapter 2.

Do we really expect you to be able to juggle these cases? No, not at all. Your modest task for now is only to be able to understand the directions rather than provide them, unless of course you're planning on moving to Russia to become a traffic police officer.

Keeping "right" and "left" straight



When people give you directions, they also often use these words:

- **sprava ot** (*sprah*-vuh uht; to the right of) + a noun in the genitive case
- **napravo** (nuh-*prah*-vuh; to the right)
- **slyeva ot** (*slye*-vuh uht; to the left of) + a noun in the genitive case
- **nalyevo** (nuh-*lye*-vuh; to the left)
- **na lyevoj storonye** (nuh *lye*-vuhy stuh-rah-*nye;* on the left side)
- **na pravoj storonye** (nuh *prah*-vahy stuh-rah-*nye*; on the right side)



Peter the Great's training methods

Peter the Great, the creator of the stable Russian Army, often trained the new recruits himself. The young recruits, who were often illiterate peasants, had an extremely hard time distinguishing between the two military commands — **napravo** (to the right) and **nalyevo** (to the left). To overcome this problem, the great tsar was said to have invented a new method of training new soldiers. He used the words the young peasants could distinguish very well: **syeno** (*sye*-nuh; hay) to indicate **nalyevo** (to the left), and the word **soloma** (sah-*loh*-muh; straw) to indicate **napravo** (to the right). And guess what? The method worked very well!

Here's a short exchange that may take place between you and a friendly-looking Russian woman:

> You: **Izvinitye, gdye magazin?** (eez-vee-*nee*-tee gdye muh-guh-*zeen*; Excuse me, where is the store?)
>
> The woman: **Magazin sprava ot aptyeki.** (muh-guh-*zeen sprah*-vuh uht uhp-*tye*-kee; The store is to the right of the pharmacy.)

Talkin' the Talk



Two friends, Oleg and Sergej, are talking on the phone. It's Saturday night and Oleg suggests that they go to a new restaurant tonight. He's already been there and is now explaining to Sergej where the restaurant is located.

Oleg: **Chto ty syegodnya dyelayesh' vyechyerom?**
shtoh tih see-*vohd*-nye *dye*-luh-eesh' *vye*-chee-ruhm?
What are you doing this evening?

Sergej: **Nichyego. A chto?**
nee-chee-*voh*. uh shtoh?
Nothing. Why?

Oleg: **Davaj pojdyom v etot novyj ryestoran na Pyetrogradskoj storonye.**
duh-*vahy puhy*-dyom v *eh*-tuht *noh*-vihy rees-tah-*rahn* nuh peet-rah-*graht*-skuhy stuh-rah-*nye.*
Let's go to this new restaurant in Petrograd side (region in St. Petersburg).

Sergej: **A, davaj. No ya tam yesh'yo nye byl. Gdye eto?**
uh, duh-*vahy*. noh ya tahm ee-*sh'oh* nye bihl. *gdye eh*-tuh?
Oh, okay. But I haven't been there yet. Where is it?

Oleg: **Ty znayesh', gdye kinotyeatr Avrora?**
tih *znah*-eesh', gdye kee-nuh-tee-*ahtr* uhv-*roh*-ruh?
Do you know where the Aurora movie theater is?

Sergej: **Nu?**
noo?
Well?

Oleg: **Eto nyedalyeko ot Avrory, na drugoj storonye.**
eh-tuh nee-duh-lee-*koh* uht uhv-*roh*-rih, nuh droo-*gohy* stuh-rah-*nye.*
It's not far from Aurora, on the other side of the street.

Sergej: **Eto chto, ryadom s bulochnoj?**
eh-tuh shtoh, *rya*-duhm s *boo*-luhch-nuhy?
Is it next to the bakery?

Oleg: **Da, sprava ot bulochnoj i slyeva ot aptyeki.**
dah, *sprah*-vuh aht *boo*-luhch-nuhy ee *slye*-vuh uht uhp-*tye*-kee.
Yes, to the right of the bakery, to the left of the pharmacy.

Sergej: **Myezhdu bulochnoj i aptyekoj?**
myezh-doo *boo*-luhch-nuhy ee uhp-*tye*-kuhy?
Between the bakery and the pharmacy?

Oleg: **Da, naprotiv bara "Vostok."**
dah, nuh-*proh*-teef *bah*-ruh vahs-*tohk.*
Yes, opposite Vostok bar.

Words to Know

Ya tam yeshyo nye byl.	ya tahm ee-sh'oh nye bihl	I haven't been there yet.
Ty znayesh'	tih znah-eesh'	Do you know
Nu?	Noo?	Well? (Go on!)
Eto nyedalyeko ot	eh-tuh nee-duh-lee-koh uht	It's not far from
na drugoj storonye	nuh droo-gohy stuh-rah-nye	on the other side of the street

Making sense of commands

Usually when somebody gives you directions, they tell you where to go, not just where something is located. For this situation, we give you several common phrases that people may use when telling you where to go. These phrases also come in handy if you ever need to give somebody else directions.

The *imperative mood* is the form in which you hear and give directions. The imperative may also come in handy in other situations where you need to make a command or a polite request.



Here are some useful phrases in the imperative mood you may hear or want to use when giving directions:

- **Iditye praymo!** (ee-*dee*-tee *prya*-muh; Go straight.)
- **Iditye nazad!** (ee-*dee*-tee nuh-*zaht*; Go back.)
- **Iditye pryamo do . . . !** (ee-*dee*-tee *prya*-muh duh; Go as far as . . .) + the noun in the genitive case
- **Podojditye k . . .** (puh-duhy-*dee*-tee k; Go up to . . .) + the noun in the dative case
- **Iditye po . . .** (ee-*dee*-tee puh; Go down along . . .) + the noun in the dative case
- **Projditye mimo** . . . (prahy-*dee*-tee *mee*-muh; Pass by . . .) + the noun in the genitive case
- **Povyernitye nalyevo!** (puh-veer-*nee*-tee nuh-*lye*-vuh; Turn left or take a left turn.)
- **Povyernitye napravo!** (puh-veer-*nee*-tee nuh-*prah*-vuh; Turn right or take a right turn.)
- **Zavyernitye za ugol!** (zuh-veer-*nee*-tee *zah*-oo-guhl; Turn around the corner.)
- **Pyeryejditye ulitsu!** (pee-reey-*dee*-tee *oo*-leet-soo; Cross the street.)
- **Pyeryejditye plosh'ad'!** (pee-reey-*dee*-tee *ploh*-sh'uht'; Cross the square.)
- **Pyeryejditye chyerez dorogu!** (pee-reey-*dee*-tee *cheh*-reez dah-*roh*-goo; Cross the street/road.)



To form the imperative when you're talking to somebody with whom you're on **vy** (vih; you; formal singular and plural) terms, such as strangers, add **-tye** as we did in the previous list. When you're speaking to somebody with whom you're on **ty** (tih; you; informal singular) terms, you can remove the **-tye.** For instance, to say "turn left" to a friend, you say **Povyerni nalyevo** (puh-veer-*nee* nuh-*lye*-vuh; Turn left).



Curiously enough, Russians don't like to indicate directions with the words **vostok** (vahs-*tohk*; east), **zapad** (*zah*-puht; west), **syever** (*sye*-veer; north), and **yug** (yuk; south). They seem to avoid them when explaining how you can reach your place of destination. Phrases like "Go south," "Turn west," and "Drive south" are very rare in direction-giving.

Talkin' the Talk



Tom is an American graduate student who came to Russia to study Russian literature. He asks a **rabotnik obsh'yezhitiya** (ruh-*boht*-neek uhp-sh'ee-*zhih*-tee-ye; dorm employee) how to get to the Dostoevsky museum.

Tom: **Skazhitye, pozhalujsta, kak mnye otsyuda popast' v muzyej Dostoyevskogo?**
skuh-*zhih*-tee, pah-*zhahl*-stuh, kahk mnye aht-*syu*-duh pah-*pahst'* v moo-*zyey* duhs-tah-*yef*-skuh-vuh?
Could you please tell me how I can get to Dostoyevsky's museum from here?

Rabotnik obsh'yezhitiya: **Muzyej Dostoyevskogo nakhoditsya na Kuznyechnom pyeryeulkye, nyedalyeko ot Kuznyechnogo rynka. Vy znayetye, gdye Kuznyechnyj rynok?**
moo-*zyey* duhs-tah-*yef*-skuh-vuh nuh-*khoh*-deet-sye nuh kooz-*nyech*-nuhm pee-ree-*ool*-kee, nee-duh-lee-*koh* uht kooz-*nyech*-nuh-vuh *rihn*-kuh. vih *znah*-ee-tee gdye kooz-*nyech*-nihy *rih*-nuhk?
Dostoyevsky's museum is located on Kuznyechnyj Lane, not far from Kuznyechnyj market. Do you know where Kuznyechnyj market is?

Tom: **Nyet, ya pyervyj dyen' v Pyetyerburgye.**
Nyet, ya *pyer*-vihy dyen' v pee-teer-*boor*-gee.
No, it' s my first day in St. Petersburg.

Rabotnik obsh'yezhitiya: **Vam nado vyjti na Nyevskij prospyekt i povyernut' napravo. Iditye pryamo po Nyevskomu prospyektu, nikuda nye svorachivaya do ulitsy Marata. Tam povyernitye opyat' napravo. Kogda dojdyotye do Kuznyechnogo pyeryeulka opyat' povyernitye napravo. Muzyej budyet na lyevoj storonye ulitsy, na uglu ulitsy Dostoyevskogo i Kuznyechnogo pyeryeulka.**
vahm *nah*-duh *vihy*-tee nuh *nyef*-skeey prahs-*pyekt* ee pah-veer-*noot'* nuh-*prah*-vuh. ee-*dee*-tee *prya*-muh pah-*nyef*-skuh-moo prahs-*pyek*-too, nee-koo-*dah* nee svah-*rah*-chee-vuh-ye dah *oo*-lee-tsih muh-*rah*-tuh. tahm puh-veer-*nee*-tee ah-*pyat'* nuh-*prah*-vuh. kahg-*dah* dahy-*dyo*-tee duh kooz-*nyech*-nuh-vuh pee-ree-*ool*-kuh ah-*pyat'* puh-veer-*nee*-tee nuh-*prah*-vuh. moo-zyey *boo*-deet nuh *lye*-vuhy stuh-rah-*nye oo*-lee-tsih, nuh oog-*loo oo*-lee-tsih duhs-tah-*yef*-skuh-vuh i kooz-*nyech*-nuh-vuh pee-ree-*ool*-kuh.
You need to go out to Nevsky Avenue and turn right. Go straight along Nevsky Avenue, don't turn anywhere until you reach Marat Street. Turn right again there. When you reach Kuznyechnyj Lane, turn right again. The museum is on the left-hand side, on the corner of Dostoyevsky Street and Kuznyechnyj Lane.

Tom: **Tak, znachit po Nyevskomu do ulitsy Marata, napravo i opyat' napravo po Kuznyechnomu pyeryeulku?**
tahk, *znah*-cheet pah *nyef*-skuh-moo dah *oo*-lee-tsih muh-*rah*-tuh, nuh-*prah*-vuh ee ah-*pyat'* nuh-*prah*-vuh pah kooz-*nyech*-nuh-moo pee-ree-*ool*-kuh?
So, you're saying along Nevsky to Marat Street, to the right and again to the right along Kuznyechnyj Lane?

Rabotnik obsh'yezhitiya: **Sovyershyenno vyerno.**
suh-veer-*sheh*-nuh *vyer*-nuh.
That's correct.

Words to Know

Kak mnye otsyuda popast' v . . .	kahk mnye aht-syu-duh pah-pahst' v	How can I get to . . . from here?
nakhoditsya	nuh-khoh-deet-sye	is located
vyjti na	vihy-tee nuh	go out to
Nikuda nye svorachivaya	nee-koo-dah nee svah-rah-chee-vuh-ye	Don't turn anywhere
Kogda dojdyotye do	kahg-dah dahy-dyo-tee duh	When you reach . . .
opyat'	ah-pyat'	again
na uglu	nuh oog-loo	on the corner

Describing Distances

Sometimes you don't want detailed information about directions. You just want to know whether someplace is near or far and how long it takes to get there. In the following sections we show you some common phrases you may use or hear when asking about distances.

Marking distances by time

Imagine you're in Moscow and you just asked a well-meaning passer-by to give you directions to Red Square. You ask a very simple question:

> **Skazhitye, pozhalujsta, kak mnye otsyuda popast' na Krasnuyu plosh'yad'?** (skuh-*zhih*-tee pah-*zhahl*-stuh kahk mnye aht-*syoo*-duh pah-*pahst'* nuh *krahs*-noo-yu *ploh*-sh'iht'; Could you tell me how I can get to Red Square from here?)

In response to your question, the sympathetic (and very talkative) Muscovite gives you an endless barrage of street names and landmarks and direction verbs to the point that you almost feel dizzy and your exhausted mind has switched off. At this point, all you want to know is whether Red Square is far away in order to decide whether you should take a taxi or some other public transportation. So with all your remaining mental energy you ask: **Eto dalyeko?** (*eh*-tuh duh-lee-*koh*; Is it far away?)



In giving directions, Russians usually like to indicate distance in terms of the time it takes to get there. Outdoorsy, younger people, may say, for example:

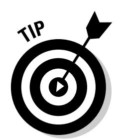
> **Eto nedalyeko. Minut pyatnadtsat' pyeshkom.** (e*h*-tuh nee-duh-lee-*koh*. mee-*noot* peet-*naht*-suht peesh-*kohm*; It's not far away. About fifteen minutes' walk.)

Those people who don't fancy walking that much may see the same distance differently and say:

> **Eto dalyeko. Minut pyatnadtsat' pyeshkom.** (*eh*-tuh duh-lee-*koh*. mee-*noot* peet-*naht*-suht' peesh-*kohm*; It's far. About fifteen minutes' walk.)

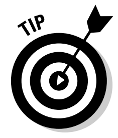


You may notice that in both the previous responses, the word **minut** (minutes) is placed before the numeral **pyatnadtsat'** (fifteen), and you may be wondering whether it's an error. Nope, that's not an error! Russian has a very special way of indicating approximate time, weight, distance, or even prices. Where English uses the word "about," Russian may simply use the method of reversing the order of words, as in **Minut pyatnadtsat' pyeshkom** (mee-*noot* peet-*naht*-suht' peesh-*kohm*; About fifteen minutes' walk). To be more exact, a Russian would say **Pyatnadtsat' minut pyeshkom** (peet-*naht*-suht' mee-*noot* peesh-*kohm*; Exactly fifteen minutes' walk).



A very popular way of indicating the distance in Russia is by counting the number of bus, tram, trolleybus, or subway stops to the place you're inquiring about. If you think that a fifteen-minute walk is a big deal, especially if you're tired, you may say in response:

> **Eto dovol'no dalyeko. Dvye ostanovki na tramvaye/avtobusye/trolyejbusye/myetro.** (*eh*-tuh dah-*vohl'*-nuh duh-lee-*koh*. dvye uhs-tuh-*nohf*-kee nuh truhm-*vahy*-ee/uhf-*toh*-boo-see/trah-*lyey*-boo-see/meet-*roh*; That's quite far away. Two stops by the tram/bus/trolleybus/metro.)



In addition to the well-known **taksi** (tuhk-*see*; taxi), you need to know four main kinds of transportation: **metro** (meet-*roh*; metro or subway), **avtobus** (uhf-*toh*-boos; bus), **trollyejbus** (trah-*lyey*-boos; trolleybus), and **tramvaj** (truhm-*vahy*; tram). See Chapter 12 for more details on public transportation in Russia.

Using actual measurements

Russians use the European system of measurements and define distances in terms of kilometers, meters, and centimeters. Within city limits, Russians feel more comfortable indicating distances using bus or tram stops or the time it takes one to cover the distance by walking (see the previous section); until recently, relatively few Russians had cars and most people used public transportation (which is excellent, by the way). However, when they talk about places not located within city limits, Russians usually use kilometers.

To ask a question about the distance between towns and cities, use the phrase **Skol'ko kilomyetrov ot** (*skohl'*-kuh kee-lah-*myet*-ruhf uht; How many kilometers is it from . . . ?) + the genitive case of the word denoting the name of the place + **do** (duh; to) + the genitive case of the word denoting the name of the other place. For example:

- **Skol'ko kilomyetrov ot Moskvy do Pyetyerburga?** (*skohl'*-kuh kee-lah-*myet*-ruhf uht mahs-*kvih* duh pee-teer-*boor*-guh; How many kilometers is it from Moscow to St. Petersburg?)
- **Skol'ko kilomyetrov ot Kiyeva do Moskvy?** (*skohl'*-kuh kee-luh-*myet*-ruhf uht *kee*-ee-vuh duh mahs-*kvih*; How many kilometers is it from Kiev to Moscow?)

To give a simple answer to the question, use numerals; we cover them in detail in Chapter 2. Just remember the following tips:

- After the numeral **odin** (ah-*deen*; one) or numerals ending in **odin** (one), use the word **kilomyetr** (kee-lah-*myetr*), as in **tridtsat' odin kilomyetr** (*treet*-tsuht' ah-*deen* kee-lah-*myetr*; thirty-one kilometers).
- After the numerals **dva** (dvah; two), **tri** (tree; three), **chyetyrye** (chee-*tih*-ree; four) or numerals ending in them, use the word **kilomyetra** (kee-lah-*myet*-ruh), as in **tri kilomyetra** (tree kee-lah-*myet*-ruh; three kilometers).
- After all other numerals, use the word **kilomyetrov** (kee-lah-*myet*-ruhf), as in **dvadtsat' pyat' kilomyetrov** (*dvaht*-suht' pyat' kee-lah-*myet*-ruhf; twenty-five kilometers).



Fun & Games

Which of the two Russian words – **gdye** or **kuda** – would you use to translate the word "where" in the following sentences? See the answers in Appendix C.

1. Where are you going?
2. Where are you?
3. Where do you live?
4. Where are you driving?
5. Where did the dog go?

Select the correct translation for the following English phrases. See the correct answers in Appendix C.

1. Next to the bank

a. **ryadom s bankom**

b. **nyedalyeko ot banka**

2. Across from the bank

a. **naprotiv banka**

b. **ryadom s bankom**

3. To the right of the bank

a. **sprava ot banka**

b. **slyeva ot banka**

Which of the listed suburbs is the furthest from St. Petersburg: Pushkin, Ryepino, Zyelyenogorsk, or Ol'gino? See the answer in Appendix C.

1. **Ot Pyetyerburga do Pushkina tridtsat' kilomyetrov.**
2. **Ot Pyetyerburga do Ryepino syem'dyesyat kilomyetrov.**
3. **Ot Pyetyerburga do Zyelyenogorska shyest'dyesyat kilomyetrov.**
4. **Ot Pyetyerburga do Ol'gino pyatnadtsat' kilomyetrov.**

Chapter 16

Handling Emergencies

In This Chapter

- Knowing how to ask for help
- Getting medical attention
- Dealing with the police

An emergency would be called something else if it were possible to be fully prepared for it. However, you can avoid some panic if you have a convenient reference guide that gives you just the right things to say in case an emergency interrupts your plans. In this chapter, you find out how to explain yourself in various unpleasant situations: asking for help during an emergency, getting help with a health concern, and talking to the police. Enjoy this emergency guide; we hope you never need to use it!

Finding Help in Case of Accidents and Other Emergencies

Dealing with accidents and emergencies in your native language is enough of a headache; problems seem twice as bad when you have to speak a foreign language to resolve them. But if you know how to ask for help, chances are you'll find somebody who makes resolving your problems much easier. In the following sections, you find out how to request help, call the Russian equivalent of 911, and explain your problem. And just in case — you discover the way to find somebody who speaks English!

Asking for help



The first thing you need to know is how to ask for help. If you aren't feeling well or don't know what to do during an emergency, address someone with the phrase **Izvinitye, mnye nuzhna pomosh'!** (eez-vee-*nee*-tee mnye noozh-*nah poh*-muhsh'; Excuse me, I need help!), or **Pomogitye mnye, pozhalujsta?** (puh-mah-*gee*-tee mnye pah-*zhahl*-stuh; Will you please help me?)

Make sure you explain what your problem is immediately after you ask for help so that the person you're talking to doesn't think you're a scam artist. Phrases you may want to say include the following:

- **Ya syebya plokho chuvstvuyu.** (ya see-*bya ploh*-khuh *choos*-tvoo-yu; I am not feeling well.)
- **Mnye plokho.** (mnye *ploh*-khuh; I am not feeling well.)
- **Pozvonitye v skoruyu pomosh'!** (puhz-vah-*nee*-tee v *skoh*-roo-yu *poh*-muhsh'; Call an ambulance!)
- **Pomogitye!** (puh-mah-*gee*-tee; Help!)
- **Pozovitye na pomosh'!** (puh-zah-*vee*-tee nuh *poh*-muhsh'; Call for help!)
- **Pozvonitye v militsiyu!** (puhz-vah-*nee*-tee v mee-*lee*-tsih-yu; Call the police!)
- **Dyerzhitye vora!** (deer-*zhih*-tee *voh*-ruh; Stop the thief!)
- **Pozhar!** (pah-*zhahr*; Fire!)



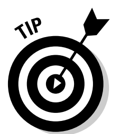
To get help, you can also say **Ya nye mogu . . .** (ya nee mah-*goo*; I can't . . .) + the infinitive of the verb describing what it is you can't do. For instance, try the verb **najti** (nuhy-*tee*; to find) or **otkryt'** (aht-*kriht'*; to open), and then follow with the item you can't find or open.

Calling the right number



In the United States, calling 911 is the answer to almost any emergency question, but it's not this way in Russia. There, you have three different numbers to call in cases of **pozhar** (pah-*zhahr*; fire), crime, or health problems. The numbers are easy, and any Russian knows them by heart:

- **01 — pozharnaya sluzhba** (pah-*zhahr*-nuh-ye *sloozh*-buh; fire brigade)
- **02 — militsiya** (mee-*lee*-tsih-ye; police)
- **03 — skoraya pomosh'** (*skoh*-ruh-ye *poh*-muhsh'; ambulance, *Literally:* urgent help)



Calls to 01, 02, and 03 numbers are free from any Russian pay phone.

Two other easy numbers to remember:

- **04 — sluzhba gaza** (*sloozh*-buh *gah*-zuh), the place where you call if you suspect gas leakage
- **09 — spravochnaya** (*sprah*-vuhch-nuh-ye; directory assistance)

Reporting a problem



When reporting an accident or an emergency, a good verb to use is **proiskhodit'** (pruh-ees-khah-*deet'*; to happen). To talk about something that is happening or has happened, you need only the third person singular form in the present tense — **proiskhodit** (pruh-ees-*khoh*-deet; is happening) — and the past tense forms:

- **proizoshyol** (pruh-ee-zah-*shohl*; has happened; masculine singular)
- **proizoshla** (pruh-ee-zah-*shlah*; has happened; feminine singular)
- **proizoshlo** (pruh-ee-zah-*shloh;* has happened; neuter singular)
- **proizoshli** (pruh-ee-zah-*shlee*; has happened; plural)

A common question you may be asked if you've witnessed an accident is **Chto proizoshlo?** (shtoh pruh-ee-zah-*shloh*; What happened?) You may also hear **Chto sluchilos'?** (shtoh sloo-*chee*-luhs'; What happened?) The two phrases are interchangeable.



Problems that you may have to report include:

- **avariya** (uh-*vah*-ree-ye; car accident)
- **nyeschastnyj sluchaj** (nee-*shahs*-nihy *sloo*-chuhy; accident)
- **pozhar** (pah-*zhahr*; fire)
- **ograblyeniye** (uhg-ruhb-*lye*-nee-ee; robbery)
- **otravlyeniye** (uht-ruhv-*lye*-nee-ee; poisoning)
- **infarkt** (een-*fahrkt*; heart attack)
- **ranyeniye** (ruh-*nye*-nee-ee; injury)

Check out Chapter 2 to find details about the genders of different nouns.

Talkin' the Talk



While walking along a street in Moscow, Stacy witnesses an accident. He calls 03 and talks to the **opyerator** (uh-pee-*rah*-tuhr; operator).

Opyerator: **Skoraya pomosh'. Slushayu.**
skoh-ruh-ye *poh*-muhsh'. *sloo*-shuh-yu.
Ambulance. How can I help you? (*Literally:* I am listening.)

Stacy: **Tut proizoshla avariya. Chyelovyek popal pod mashinu.**
toot pruh-ee-zah-*shlah* uh-*vah*-ree-ye. chee-lah-*vyek* pah-*pahl* puhd mah-*shih*-noo.
A road accident happened here. A person was hit by a car.

Opyerator: **Gdye proizoshla avariya? Adryes?**
gdye pruh-ee-zah-*shlah* uh-*vah*-ree-ye? *ahd*-rees?
Where did the accident happen? What is the address?

Stacy: **Na uglu ulitsy Tvyerskoj i Pushkinskogo bul'vara.**
nuh oog-*loo oo*-lee-tsih tveer-*skohy* ee *poosh*-keen-skuhy-vuh bool'-*vah*-ruh.
At the corner of Tverskaya Street and Pushkinskiy Avenue.

Opyerator: **V kakom sostoyanii potyerpyevshij?**
f kah-*kohm* suhs-tah-*ya*-nee-ee puh-teer-*pyef*-shihy?
What's the condition of the victim?

Stacy: **Byez soznaniya.**
byes sahz-*nah*-nee-ye.
Unconscious.

Opyerator: **Vy — rodstvyennik potyerpyevshyego?**
vih — *roht*-stvee-neek puh-teer-*pyef*-shih-vuh?
Are you a relative of the victim?

Stacy: **Nyet, ya — prosto prokhozhij, sluchajnyj svidyetyel'.**
nyet, ya — *prohs*-tuh prah-*khoh*-zhihy, sloo-*chahy*-nihy svee-*dye*-teel'.
No, I'm just a passerby, an accidental witness.

Opyerator: **Brigada vyyezzhayet.**
bree-*gah*-duh vih-eez-*zhah*-eet.
An ambulance is on its way.

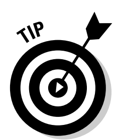
Words to Know

Slushayu.	sloo-shuh-yu	How can I help you? (Literally: I am listening.)
Chyelovyek popal pod mashinu.	chee-lah-vyek pah-pahl puhd muh-shih-noo	A person was hit by a car.
Gdye proizoshla avariya?	gdye pruh-ee-zah-shlah uh-vah-ree-ye	Where did the accident happen?
V kakom sostoyanii potyerpyevshij?	f kuh-kohm suhs-tah-ya-nee-ee puh-teer-pyef-shihy	What is the condition of the victim?
byez soznaniya	byes sahz-nah-nee-ye	unconscious
v soznanii	f sahz-nah-nee-ee	conscious
prokhozhiy	prah-khoh-zhihy	passerby
svidyetyel'	svee-dye-teel'	witness
Brigada vyyezzhayet.	bree-gah-duh vih-eez-zhah-eet	An ambulance is on its way.

Requesting English-speaking help

In case you don't feel like practicing your Russian in the midst of an emergency, or if you just want to speed up the process, you may want to ask for English-speaking help. The question you want to use is **Zdyes' yest' kto-nibud', kto govorit po-anglijski?** (zdyes' yest' *ktoh*- nee-boot' ktoh guh-vah-*reet* puh uhng-*leey*-skee; Is there anybody here who speaks English?)

If you want to insist on finding somebody who can help you in English, say **Mnye nuzhyen kto-nibud', kto govorit po-anglijski!** (mnye *noo*-zhihn *ktoh*-nee-boot' ktoh guh-vah-*reet* puh uhng-*leey*-skee; I need somebody who speaks English!)



If you're making this request at a hospital or some other place staffed with highly educated people, you have a good chance of finding somebody who speaks English; many Russians study English in school and college.

In Moscow and St. Petersburg, you can find clinics with American and British doctors. Here are some of these clinics:

American Clinic at 31 Grokholskij Pyeryeulok, 129090 Moscow

Phones: 095-937-5757, 095-937-5774

e-mail: `info@americanclinic.ru`

European Medical Center at 10 2nd Spiridoniyevskij per. 5, bld. 1 Moscow

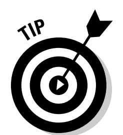
Phone: 095-933-6655

American Medical Center St. Petersburg at 10 Syerpukhovskaya St., 198013 St. Petersburg

Phone: 812-326-1730

Receiving Medical Care

If "an apple a day" doesn't work, you may need to **pojti k vrachu** (pahy-*tee* k vruh-*choo*; see a doctor). Every culture has different beliefs and procedures related to **zdorov'ye** (zdah-*rohv'*-ee; health) and **myeditsina** (mee-dee-*tsih*-nuh; medicine), and knowing what they are before visiting a doctor helps. In the following sections, you find out how to talk about medical problems in Russian, how to understand your diagnosis, and what to say and do in a pharmacy.



To make an appointment with a specific doctor at a big **poliklinika** (puh-lee-*klee*-nee-kuh; clinic), you need to go to the **ryegistratura** (ree-gees-truh-*too*-ruh; check-in desk) and say **Mnye nado zapisat'sya na priyom k . . .** (mnye *nah*-duh zuh-pee-*saht'*-sye nuh pree-*yom* k; I need to make an appointment with . . .), + the type of doctor you want to see in the dative case (for more info on case endings, see Chapter 2). At some **polikliniki** (puh-lee-*klee*-nee-kee; clinics), you may be able to make an appointment over the phone; at others, you always have to show up in person. To find out which is the case, you can call the **poliklinika** and ask: **Mozhno zapisat'sya na priyom?** (*mohzh*-nuh zuh-pee-*saht'*-sye nuh pree-*yom*; Can I make an appointment?)

For an emergency, call a **skoraya pomosh'** (*skoh*-ruh-ye *poh*-muhsh'; ambulance) by dialing 03. The ambulance will come and take the patient to the emergency room, also called **skoraya pomosh'.**



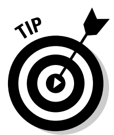
Health is more valuable than money

According to a Russian proverb, **zdorov'ye dorozhye dyenyeg** (zdah-*rohv'*-ye dah-*roh*-zhih *dye*-neek; health is more valuable than money). Believing this bit of folk wisdom was easy during the times of the Soviet Union, when medicine was free for all Soviet citizens. Nowadays, numerous **chastnyye kliniki** (*chahs*-nih-ee *klee*-nee-kee; private medical offices) offer a variety of **platnyye uslugi** (*plaht*-nih-ee oos-*loo*-gee; services for a fee). State-owned hospitals and medical offices are still free, but you're expected to pay for your medicine, and a monetary donation to the doctor is strongly encouraged.

Knowing your own anatomy

When you go to a doctor, you want to know how to talk about your **tyelo** (*tye*-luh; body). The following list starts with the visible parts, going from the top down:

- **golova** (guh-lah-*vah*; head)
- **shyeya** (*sheh*-ye; neck)
- **gorlo** (*gohr*-luh; throat)
- **plyecho** (plee-*choh*; shoulder)
- **grud'** (groot'; chest/breast)
- **spina** (spee-*nah*; back)
- **ruka** (roo-*kah*; arm/hand)
- **lokot'** (*loh*-kuht'; elbow)
- **zapyast'ye** (zuh-*pyast'*-ee; wrist)
- **palyets** (*pah*-leets; finger)
- **nogti** (*nohk*-tee; nails)
- **zhivot** (zhih-*voht*; stomach)
- **polovyye organy** (puh-lah-*vih*-ee *ohr*-guh-nih; genitals)
- **noga** (nah-*gah*; leg/foot)
- **kolyeno** (kah-*lye*-nuh; knee)
- **lodyzhka** (lah-*dihsh*-kuh; ankle)
- **kozha** (*koh*-zhuh; skin)



In Russian, no distinction exists between the arm and the hand; for both body parts, you use the word **ruka.** Similarly, for both leg and foot, you use the word **noga.**

Parts of your head that you may seek treatment for include the following:

- **litso** (lee-*tsoh*; face)
- **glaz** (glahs; eye)
- **ukho** (*oo*-khuh; ear)
- **nos** (nohs; nose)
- **rot** (roht; mouth)
- **zub** (zoop; tooth)
- **podborodok** (puhd-bah-*roh*-duhk; chin)
- **yazyk** (ee-*zihk*; tongue)

The internal organs you may need to talk about include these body parts:

- **syerdtsye** (*syer*-tseh; heart)
- **pyechyen'** (*pye*-chihn'; liver)
- **zhyeludok** (zhih-*loo*-duhk; stomach)
- **mozg** (mohzk; brain)
- **lyogkiye** (*lyokh*-kee-ee; lungs)
- **kost'** (kohst'; bone)
- **muskuly** (*moos*-koo-lih; muscles)
- **pochka** (*pohch*-kuh; kidney)
- **nyervy** (*nyer*-vih; nerves)

Describing your symptoms to a doctor

The first question you hear from a doctor is usually **Chto u vas bolit?** (shtoh u vahs bah-*leet*; What is hurting you?) or **Chto vas byespokoit?** (shtoh vahs bees-pah-*koh*-eet; What brought you here, *Literally:* What is bothering you?)

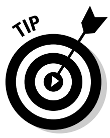
The best way to start describing your symptoms if you're in pain is with the verb **bolyet** (bah-*lyet'*; to hurt): **U myenya bolit** . . . (oo mee-*nya* bah-*leet*; . . . is hurting) + the name of the organ that hurts in the nominative case.

You can also point to the place where it hurts and say **U myenya bolit zdyes'** (oo mee-*nya* bah-*leet* zdyes'; It hurts me here). You may want to specify

whether it hurts **vnutri** (vnoo-*tree*; inside) or **snaruzhi** (snah-*roo*-zhih; on the outside).

To describe specific, less-painful symptoms, you say **U myenya . . .** (oo mee-*nya*; I have . . .) + one of the phrases from the following list:

- **tyempyeratura** (teem-pee-ruh-*too*-ruh; fever)
- **ponos** (pah-*nohs*; diarrhea)
- **zapor** (zuh-*pohr*; constipation)
- **toshnota** (tuhsh-nah-*tah*; nausea)
- **bolit gorlo** (bah-*leet gohr*-luh; sore throat)
- **bolit golova** (bah-*leet* guh-lah-*vah*; headache)
- **bolit zhivot** (bah-*leet* zhih-*voht*; stomachache)
- **bolit ukho** (bah-*leet oo*-khuh; earache)
- **kashyel'** (*kah*-shihl'; cough)
- **nasmork** (*nahs*-muhrk; runny nose)
- **syp'** (sihp'; rash)
- **ozhog** (ah-*zhohk*; burn)
- **bol'** (bohl'; pain)



In Russia, temperature is measured in Celsius. Normal body temperature is 36.6°C. Anything above is a **vysokaya tyempyeratura** (vih-*soh*-kuh-ye teem-pee-ruh-*too*-ruh; high fever).

Talkin' the Talk



Kate is spending her vacation in St. Petersburg. She starts to feel unwell, so she goes to see a **vrach** (vrahch; doctor).

Kate: **Doktor, ya syebya plokho chuvstvuyu.**
dohk-tuhr, ya see-*bya ploh*-khuh *choos*-tvoo-yu.
Doctor, I am not feeling well.

Vrach: **Chto vas byespokoit?**
shtoh vahs bees-pah-*koh*-eet?
What is the problem?

Kate: **U myenya bolit zhivot.**
oo mee-*nya* bah-*leet* zhih-*voht.*
My stomach is hurting.

Vrach: **Bol' ryezkaya ili noyush'aya?**
bohl' *ryes*-kuh-ye *ee*-lee *noh*-yu-sh'uh-ye?
Is the pain sharp or dull?

Kate: **Noyush'aya. I yesh'yo u myenya tyempyeratura.**
noh-yu-sh'uh-ye. ee-*sh'oh* oo mee-*nya* teem-pee-ruh-*too*-ruh.
It's dull. I also have a fever.

Vrach: **Toshnota ili rvota yest'?**
tuhsh-nah-*tah* *ee*-lee *rvoh*-tuh yest'?
Do you have nausea or vomiting?

Kate: **Nyet. No nyemnogo kruzhitsya golova.**
nyet. noh nee-*mnoh*-guh *kroo*-zhiht-sye guh-lah-*vah*.
No. But I am a little dizzy.

Vrach: **Budyem provodit osmotr. Razdyevajtyes'.**
boo-deem pruh-vah-*deet'* ahs-*mohtr*. ruhz-dee-*vahy*-tees'.
Let's examine you. Undress, please.

Words to Know

ryezkaya bol'	ryes-kuh-ye bohl'	sharp pain
noyush'aya bol'	noh-yu-sh'uh-ye bohl'	dull pain
yesh'yo	ee-sh'oh	also
rvota	rvoh-tuh	vomiting
No nyemnogo kruzhitsya golova.	noh neem-noh-guh kroo-zhiht-sye guh-lah-vah	But I am a little dizzy.
provodit osmotr	pruh-vah-deet' ahs-mohtr	to examine
razdyevajtyes'	ruhz-dee-vahy-tees'	undress

Announcing allergies or special conditions



Asking about allergies and special conditions isn't always a part of a Russian doctor's routine. Make sure you take the initiative and tell the doctor **U myenya allyergiya na . . .** (oo mee-*nya* uh-leer-*gee*-ye nuh; I am allergic to . . .) + the word naming the cause of the allergy in the accusative case. Common causes of allergies include:

- **pyenitsillin** (pee-nee-tsih-*leen*; penicillin)
- **oryekhi** (ah-*rye*-khee; nuts)
- **obyezbalivayush'yeye** (uh-beez-*bah*-lee-vuh-yu-sh'ee-ee; painkillers)
- **ukus pchyely** (oo-*koos* pchee-*lih*; bee stings)
- **koshki** (*kohsh*-kee; cats)
- **sobaki** (sah-*bah*-kee; dogs)
- **yajtsa** (*yahy*-tsuh; eggs)
- **pyl'tsa** (pihl'-*tsah*; pollen)
- **plyesyen'** (*plye*-seen'; mold)
- **moloko** (muh-lah-*koh*; milk)
- **mollyuski** (mah-*lyus*-kee; shellfish)
- **ryba** (*rih*-buh; fish)



If you're on some kind of medication, tell your doctor **Ya prinimayu . . .** (ya pree-nee-*mah*-yu; I am on . . ., *Literally:* I take . . .) + the name of the medication. Some other special conditions that you may need to announce to the doctor include:

- **U myenya astma.** (oo mee-*nya ahst*-muh; I have asthma.)
- **Ya yepilyeptik.** (ya ee-pee-*lyep*-teek; I have epilepsy.)
- **Ya diabyetik.** (ya dee-uh-*beh*-teek; I have diabetes.)
- **Ya byeryemyenna.** (ya bee-*rye*-mee-nuh; I am pregnant.)

Seeing a specialist

In Russia, medicine is organized differently: Each doctor specializes not on a part of the body (for example, on the foot or arm), but on a type of organ (for instance, the skin, bone, or nerves). If you go to a Russian physician and say that your foot hurts, he doesn't send you to a foot doctor, as he would in the United States. Instead, he finds out what type of problem you have and then

sends you to a **dyermatolog** (deer-muh-*toh*-luhk; dermatologist) if your problem concerns the skin of your foot; to a **khirurg** (khee-*roork*; surgeon) if you broke a bone in your foot; or to a **nyevropatolog** (neev-ruh-puh-*toh*-luhk; neuropathologist) if your problem stems from nerve connections.

Some other doctors and their areas of specialization include:

- **ukho-gorlo-nos** (*oo*-khuh *gohr*-luh nohs; *Literally:* ear-throat-nose), or **lor** (lohr) — not unpredictably, this doctor specializes in the ear-throat-nose system
- **dantist** (duhn-*teest*; dentist), also known as **zubnoj vrach** (zoob-*nohy* vrahch)
- **vyenyerolog** (vee-nee-*roh*-luhk) — specializes in venereal diseases
- **narkolog** (nahr-*koh*-luhk) — specializes in drug addictions
- **tyerapyevt** (tee-ruh-*pyeft*; internist)
- **glaznoj vrach** (gluhz-*nohy* vrahch; eye doctor)
- **ginyekolog** (gee-nee-*koh*-luhk; gynecologist)
- **ortopyed** (uhr-tah-*pyet*; orthopedist)
- **pyediatr** (pee-dee-*ahtr*; pediatrician)
- **nyevropatolog** (neev-ruh-puh-*toh*-luhk; neurologist)
- **khirurg** (khee-*roork*; surgeon)
- **psikhiatr** (psee-khee-*ahtr*; psychiatrist)
- **kardiolog** (kuhr-dee-*oh*-luhk; cardiologist)



Some employers require a **myeditsinskoye obslyedovaniye** (mee-dee-*tsihns*-kuh-ee ahbs-*lye*-duh-vuh-nee-ee; full medical examination) from their potential employees. And in Russia, going through a **myeditsinskoye obslyedovaniye** requires seeing half a dozen doctors.

Undergoing an examination and getting a diagnosis

During a medical examination, you may hear the following phrases:

- **Razdyen'tyes' do poyasa.** (ruhz-*dyen'*-tees' duh *poh*-ee-suh; Undress from your waist up.)
- **Razdyen'tyes' polnost'yu.** (ruhz-*dyen'*-tees' *pohl*-nuhst'-yu; Take off all your clothes.)
- **Zakatitye rukav.** (zuh-kuh-*tee*-tee roo-*kahf*; Please roll up your sleeve.)

- **Gluboko vdokhnitye.** (gloo-bah-*koh* vdahkh-*nee*-tee; Take a deep breath.)
- **Lozhityes'.** (lah-*zhih*-tees'; Please lie down.)
- **Otkrojtye rot.** (aht-*krohy*-tee roht; Open your mouth.)
- **Pokazhitye yazyk.** (puh-kuh-*zhih*-tee ee-*zihk*; Stick out your tongue.)

You also may have to undergo the following tests:

- **analiz krovi** (uh-*nah*-leez *kroh*-vee; blood test)
- **analiz mochi** (uh-*nah*-leez mah-*chee*; urine test)
- **ryengyen** (reen-*gyen*; X-ray)
- **yelyektrokardiogramma** (ee-*lyekt*-ruh-kuhr-dee-ahg-*rah*-muh; electrocardiogram)
- **sonogramma** (suh-nah-*grah*-muh; sonogram)
- **ul'trazvuk** (ool'-truh-*zvook*; ultrasound)

After all the turmoil of going through the **osmotr** (ahs-*mohtr*; medical examination), you're ready to hear your **diagnoz** (dee-*ahg*-nuhs; diagnosis). The doctor will probably phrase it this way: **U vas . . .** (oo vahs; you have . . .) plus the diagnosis itself. For instance, you may hear that you have one of the following:

- **prostuda** (prahs-*too*-duh; cold)
- **angina** (uhn-*gee*-nuh; sore throat)
- **gripp** (greep; flu)
- **bronkhit** (brahn-*kheet*; bronchitis)
- **migryen'** (mee-*gryen'*; migraine)
- **infyektsiya** (een-*fyek*-tsih-ye; infection)
- **pnyevmoniya** (pneev-mah-*nee*-ye; pneumonia)
- **syennaya likhoradka** (*sye*-nuh-ye lee-khah-*raht*-kuh; hay fever)
- **rastyazhyeniye svyazok** (ruhs-tee-*zheh*-nee-ee *svya*-zuhk; sprain)



Russian doctors aren't in the habit of explaining what they're doing, either during the examination or while prescribing you treatment. If you, on top of getting a recommendation on how to cure yourself, want to know what's actually wrong with you, you may need to ask: **A chto u myenya?** (ah shtoh oo mee-*nya*; What do I have?) or **Kakaya u myenya bolyezn'?** (kuh-*kah*-ye oo mee-*nya* bah-*lyezn'*; What kind of illness do I have?)

If the doctor recommends that you go to the hospital — **lozhit'sya v bol'nitsu** (lah-*zhiht'*-sye v bahl'-*nee*-tsoo) — you have a more serious condition. Maybe you have **appyenditsit** (ah-peen-dee-*tsiht*; appendicitis), **pyeryelom** (pee-ree-*lohm*; a broken bone), or **pish'yevoye otravlyeniye** (pee-sh'ee-*voh*-ee uht-ruhv-*lye*-nee-ee; food poisoning).



Don't panic if the doctor recommends that you go to the hospital; it doesn't necessarily mean that your condition is critical. Russians tend to go to the hospital more often and stay there longer than Americans generally do. For a comparison: A new mother with a baby stays in the hospital for two weeks in Russia, versus a stay of only 48 hours in the United States.

Your doctor can also prescribe for you to **khodit' na protsyedury** (khah-*deet'* nuh pruh-tsih-*doo*-rih; take treatment). A prescription doesn't necessarily imply that you have to stay at the hospital; you may need to come to the hospital daily, or several times a week, for a certain type of treatment. In this case, the doctor gives you a **napravlyeniye** (nuh-pruhv-*lye*-nee-ee; written treatment authorization).

Visiting a pharmacy

In most cases, a doctor will **propisat' lyekarstvo** (pruh-pee-*saht'* lee-*kahrst*-vuh; prescribe a medicine) for you. The Russian word for prescription is **ryetsyept** (ree-*tsehpt*).



The Russian word **ryetsyept** is an interpreter's false friend. To an English speaker, it sounds a lot like "receipt." Watch out, though! The Russian for "receipt" is **chyek** (chehk). **Ryetsyept,** on the other hand, means "prescription" or "recipe."



To get your **lyekarstvo,** you need to go to the **aptyeka** (uhp-*tye*-kuh; pharmacy). Unlike in the United States, a Russian pharmacy isn't usually a part of a big department store; it's a separate little store, where only medicine is sold. To get your **lyekarstvo,** you hand your **ryetsyept** to the **aptyekar'** (uhp-*tye*-kuhr'; pharmacist). Alternatively, you can say

- **Mnye nuzhyen . . .** (mnye *noo*-zhihn; I need . . .) + the masculine name of the medicine
- **Mnye nuzhna . . .** (mnye noozh-*nah*; I need . . .) + the feminine name of the medicine
- **Mnye nuzhno . . .** (mnye noozh-*noh*; I need . . .) + the neuter name of the medicine
- **Mnye nuzhny . . .** (mnye noozh-*nih*; I need . . .) + the plural name of the medicine(s)

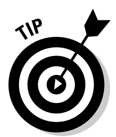


Going herbal

Russians are big on herbal medicine, which they call **lyechyeniye travami** (lee-*chye*-nee-ye *trah*-vah-mee). Unlike in the United States, herbs are not seen as an alternative medicine; even general practitioners often prescribe something herbal. Every Russian pharmacy has a wide selection of herbs for any cause, from sleeplessness to gastritis. Pharmacists usually offer an herbal substitute or supplement for the medicine you go to buy.

Some common medicines include

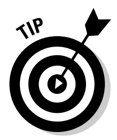
- **nyejtralizuyush'yeye kislotu sryedstvo** (neey-truh-lee-*zoo*-yu-sh'ih-ee kees-lah-*too sryets*-tvuh; antacid)
- **aspirin** (uhs-pee-*reen*; aspirin)
- **kapli ot kashlya** (*kahp*-lee uht *kahsh*-lye; cough drops)
- **sirop ot kashlya** (see-*rohp* uht *kahsh*-lye; cough syrup)
- **sryedstvo dlya snizhyeniya tyempyeratury** (*sryets*-tvuh dlya snee-*zheh*-nee-ye teem-pee-ruh-*too*-rih; fever reducer)
- **bolyeutolyayush'yeye** (boh-lee-oo-tuh-*lya*-yu-sh'ee-ee; pain reliever)
- **sryedstvo ot izzhyogi** (*sryets*-tvuh uht eez-*zhoh*-gee; heartburn reliever)



You can buy many drugs that require prescriptions in the United States as over-the-counter drugs in Russia. So, to save the time you would've spent going to the doctor, you can just ask the pharmacist for **chto-nibud' ot prostudy** (shtoh nee-*boot'* uht prahs-*too*-dih; something for the cold).

Calling the Police When You're the Victim of a Crime

In the difficult situation of becoming a victim of crime, you need to know where to turn to for help and what to say to the people helping you. In the following sections, you find out how to talk to the police about different crimes and answer their questions.



If the crime is serious, you should try to contact your embassy before contacting the police. A person at the embassy will advise you on what to do and help you through the difficult situation.

Talking to the police

You can contact the **militsiya** (mee-*lee*-tsih-ye; police) by calling 02 (see the section "Calling the right number" earlier in this chapter) or by going directly **v otdyelyeniye militsii** (v uht-dee-*lye*-nee-ye mee-*lee*-tsih-ee; to the police station). To find the nearest police station, you can ask a passerby **Gdye blizhajshyeye otdyelyeniye militsii?** (gdye blee-*zhahy*-shih-ee uht-dee-*lye*-nee-ye mee-*lee*-tsih-ee; Where is the nearest police station?)



Here are some useful phrases you can use to describe different types of crime to the police:

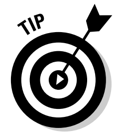
- **Myenya ograbili.** (mee-*nya* ah-*grah*-bee-lee; I was robbed.)
- **Myenya obokrali.** (mee-*nya* uh-bah-*krah*-lee; I became a victim of a theft.)
- **Na myenya bylo sovyershyeno napadyeniye.** (nuh mee-*nya* *bih*-luh suh-veer-shih-*noh* nuh-puh-*dye*-nee-ee; I was attacked.)
- **Moyu kvartiru obvorovali.** (mah-*yu* kvahr-*tee*-roo uhb-vuh-rah-*vah*-lee; My apartment was broken into.)
- **Ya stal zhyertvoj moshyennichyestva.** (ya stahl *zhehr*-tvohy muh-*sheh*-nee-chihst-vuh; I became a victim of a fraud; masculine.)
- **Ya stala zhyertvoj moschyennichyestva.** (ya *stah*-lah *zhehr*-tvuhy muh-*sheh*-nee-chihst-vuh; I became a victim of a fraud; feminine.)
- **Moyu mashinu obokrali.** (mah-*yu* muh-*shih*-noo uh-bahk-*rah*-lee; My car was broken into, *Literally:* My car was robbed.)



In order to report a specific item that's stolen from you, use the phrase **U myenya ukrali . . .** (oo mee-*nya* oo-*krah*-lee; They stole . . .) + the name of the item in the accusative case. (For more info on case endings, see Chapter 2.)

Answering questions from the police

When a crime is reported, the police want to gather more information about **pryestuplyeniye** (prees-toop-*lye*-nee-ee; the crime) and **pryestupnik** (prees-*toop*-neek; the criminal).



When talking to the police and describing the incident, you may need to use the words **vor** (vohr; thief), **karmannik** (kuhr-*mah*-neek; pickpocket), or **bandit** (buhn-*deet*; gangster) to refer to the criminal.

The police may want to know the **vremya** (*vrye*-mye; time) and **myesto** (*myes*-tuh; place) of the **proisshyestviye** (pruh-ee-*shehst*-vee-ee; incident). They may ask you to describe the **vnyeshnost'** (*vnyesh*-nuhst'; appearance) of the criminal, and **kuda on skrylsya** (koo-*dah* ohn *skrihl*-sye; in what direction he escaped). They may also ask whether he was **odin** (ah-*deen*; alone) or **s soobsh'nikami** (s sah-*ohb*-sh'nee-kuh-mee; with accomplices).

If you're physically assaulted or threatened with an **oruzhiye** (ah-*roo*-zhih-ee; weapon), the police will ask **Chyem vas udarili?** (chyem vahs oo-*dah*-ree-lee; What were you hit with?) or **Chyem vam ugrozhali?** (chyem vahm oog-rah-*zhah*-lee; What were you threatened with?)



To answer the question **Chyem vas udarili,** use the noun in the instrumental case because this case expresses the means or tool with which something is done: **udarili rukoj** (oo-*dah*-ree-lee roo-*kohj*; hit with a hand) or **ugrozhali pistolyetom** (oog-rah-*zhah*-lee pees-tah-*lye*-tuhm; threatened with a gun), for example. (For details on the instrumental case, see Chapter 2.)

After answering the questions, you may need to state the same information in a **zayavlyeniye** (zuh-eev-*lye*-nee-ee; police report).



Fun & Games

Which of these places would you call in each of the following situations? Match the emergencies from the left column with the right places to call from the right column. See Appendix C for the answers.

1. **Chyelovyek popal pod mashinu**	a. **militsiya**
2. **Vas ograbili**	b. **pozharnaya sluzhba**
3. **pozhar**	c. **skoraya pomosh'**

Match these symptoms with the most probable sicknesses that cause them from the list below. Check out Appendix C for the answers.

1. **vysokaya tyempyeratura**, **nasmork**, **kashyel'**

2. **ostraya bol' v zhivotye**, **toshnota**, **rvota**

3. **bol' v gorlye**

a. **angina** b. **prostuda** c. **pish'yevoye otravlyeniye**

Choose the word that doesn't belong in the group. The answers are in Appendix C.

1. **moshyennichestvo**, **napadyeniye**, **gripp**

2. **aspirin**, **pryestupnik**, **aptyeka**

3. **lyekarstvo**, **vrach**, **pozhar**

Part IV
The Part of Tens



"...and remember, no more Russian tongue twisters until you know the language better."

In this part . . .

Part IV gives you short but valuable lists of practical information on how to pick up Russian more quickly and how to start impressing native speakers with your Russian right away. To help you pick up Russian, we give you ten tried and true tips that have worked for many others, including one of the authors of this book. We also tell you ten favorite Russian expressions, which are sure to warm the heart of any Russian you say them to. We introduce you to ten Russian holidays, and we give you ten Russian phrases that are bound to win you “native speaker” points. And finally, we warn you about ten things you never want to say or do in Russia. If you follow the suggestions in this part, you’re sure to win the minds and hearts of most Russians you meet!

Chapter 17

Ten Ways to Pick Up Russian Quickly

In This Chapter

- Engaging in activities that will advance your Russian
- Practicing Russian in the right places

We're not breaking any news to you by saying that the best way to learn a language is by using it. You have a much better chance of remembering **Kak dyela?** (kahk dee-*lah*; How are you?) after you say it to a Russian and actually hear **Normal'no!** (nahr-*mahl'*-nuh; Fine!) in response — just like you can read about in Chapter 3! You'll feel that your language skills are advanced, to say the least.

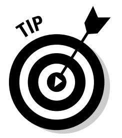
Coming up with new and fun ways to practice your Russian isn't always easy, though. That's why we give you some ideas in this chapter on creative ways to bring Russian into your life. Try them and feel free to come up with your own! After all, your life will contain only as much Russian as you let into it.

Check Out Russian TV, Movies, and Music

Whether you're into independent cinema or action movies, classical ballet or rock music, Russians have something to offer for any taste. Browse the foreign section of a DVD rental and the world music shelf of your local library, and you can definitely find something with which to practice your Russian. As far as movies go, be sure to get a Russian-language version with subtitles, rather than a dubbed one. And plenty of Russian-language TV channels exist in America — your cable service may even come with one!

Listen to Russian Radio Programs

You can advance your Russian without sitting down and giving it your undivided attention by listening to a Russian radio program in the car, during a walk, or while doing the dishes. Who knows how much of that new vocabulary will get stuck in your subconscious!



A variety of Russian radio stations broadcast on the Internet. For a comprehensive guide to Russian radio online, go to www.multilingualbooks.com/online-radio-russian.html.

Read Russian Publications

Seeing a phrase in a phrase book, even if it's your favorite *Russian For Dummies,* is one thing. Seeing a phrase in a real Russian newspaper and actually recognizing it is a totally different experience.

Pick up a copy of a Russian publication, which are available in many libraries. Russian immigrant establishments, such as law offices and stores, often have local Russian-language newspapers lying around; the bonus of reading those papers is finding out what's going on locally with Russian social and cultural life. Reading such publications also is a good way to practice recognizing and "decoding" Cyrillic.

Surf the Internet

Now that the Internet exists, no one can complain about the lack of ways to practice Russian. Just remember that Russian Web sites end in ru. You may want to start your exploit from some of these Web sites:

- lenta.ru
- list.mail.ru/index.html
- menu.ru
- moskva.ru
- www.spb.ru
- www.theatre.ru/emain.html

And on blogs.mail.ru, you can read **blogi** (*bloh*-gee; blogs) in Russian, or even create your own.



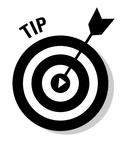
Sometimes, Russian characters don't show properly on the Internet. If, instead of Cyrillic, you see a bunch of characters that look like $$##%%&&, change the encoding to Cyrillic. To do that, go to **View,** then **Encoding,** and try different Cyrillic encodings until you find the one that works.

Visit a Russian Restaurant

Most major American cities have at least one Russian restaurant. You may get more out of your visit than just a bowl of steaming **borsh'** (bohrsh') and a plate of aromatic **golubtsy** (guh-loop-*tsih;* rissoule rolled in cabbage leaves). Be ambitious, and talk to the staff exclusively in Russian. You may be pleasantly surprised by how supportive Russians can be when people try to speak their language. And who knows, your language skills may even get you a bargain! See Chapter 5 for details on visiting a restaurant.

Find a Russian Pen Pal

If you strike a personal connection with someone in a Russian chat room, you may get the chance to not only practice your Russian but also find an interesting interlocutor, and even a good friend. Some Russian **chaty** (*chah*-tih; chat rooms) to go to are `chat.mail.ru`, `www.divan.ru`, and `www.games.ru/chat`. You may even want to open your own Russian e-mail account to exchange messages with your new friend; good places to do so are `Mail.ru` and `Rambler.ru`.



If you want to type in Russian, but don't have a Russian keyboard, you can either put stickers with Russian letters on your regular English keyboard, or use an online Russian keyboard, such as the one at `http://www.yandex.ru/keyboard_qwerty.html`.

Teach English to a Russian Immigrant

Because learning is a mutual experience, teaching English to a Russian speaker may be a great way to advance your Russian. If you don't know anybody from the local Russian community, you can post an ad in a Russian store or restaurant. Writing that ad can be your first Russian exercise!

After you find a Russian establishment, you can just ask people who work there about other Russian restaurants and stores. Make sure to explain that you're looking for them to practice your language skills. Russians will be flattered by your interest in their culture and will happily share the information with you. You may even make some friends right there.

Visit a Jewish Community Center

A number of Jewish immigrants came to America throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century; many of them came from the former Soviet Union, where Russian was their native language. For many of them — especially the older generations — the Russian language is a part of their cultural heritage, and some events at a Jewish community center may be held in Russian.

You can find a Jewish community center through the Internet or in the phone book. Pay a visit there; you'll find out whether you can attend any Russian-language events. If you're willing to donate your time, offer to volunteer. Elderly immigrants may use some help from someone who speaks English, and it will be a great opportunity for you to practice your Russian.

Travel to Russia

Nothing beats traveling to the country of your interest. Whether you're going to Russia for a year of teaching English to Moscow high school students, a week of sightseeing, or a walk through the streets of St. Petersburg while your cruise ship is waiting in the port, no place makes practicing Russian easier than, well, Russia. See Chapter 11 for details on planning a trip.

Marry a Russian

If you're really set on the idea of speaking Russian like a native, you gotta do what you gotta do. Marry (or at least date) a Russian, and convince him or her to teach you the language. Of course, we're being a little tongue-in-cheek. We don't advocate that you go out and find yourself a Russian spouse just to improve your language skills. But if you do decide to date or marry a Russian, you should know that you have a great opportunity to dramatically improve your Russian. So take advantage of it! Watch out, though: Russians assimilate quickly, and you may end up spending much more time teaching English than being taught Russian. Then you'll have to resort to the secret weapon: Learning Russian from your mother-in-law!

Chapter 18

Ten Favorite Russian Expressions

In This Chapter

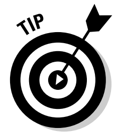
- Exploring phrases beyond their dictionary definitions
- Discovering the most popular Russian quotes and proverbs

Every culture has a way of taking familiar words and turning them into something else. The most diligent student can flip through his dictionary, and based on the literal translation, still have no idea what an expression means or why everybody is laughing. This chapter brings together ten words and expressions that Russians use a lot, and whose meanings aren't always intuitive. Recognizing these expressions in speech and using them with ease can make you sound really Russian!

Oj!

To express surprise, dismay, admiration, gratitude, or even pain — pretty much any strong feeling — Russians say **Oj!** (ohy) Use **Oj!** when in English you would say "oops," "ouch," or "wow," or make a facial expression. You can confidently use **Oj!** in any of the following sentences:

- **Oj, kak krasivo!** (ohy kahk kruh-*see*-vuh; Wow, how beautiful!)
- **Oj, spasibo!** (ohy spuh-*see*-buh; Thank you so much!)
- **Oj, kto eto?** (ohy ktoh *eh*-tuh; Who in the world is this?)
- **Oj, kak priyatno slyshat' tvoj golos!** (ohy kahk pree-*yaht*-nah *slih*-shuht' tvohy *goh*-luhs; Oh, it's so nice to hear your voice!)



Russians consider **Oj!** a more feminine exclamation; men, on the other hand, are supposed to grind their teeth and keep their emotions to themselves.

Davaj

If you look up **davaj** (duh-*vahy*) in the dictionary, you find the translation "give." Russians, however, use the word in all kinds of situations. It's a popular way to suggest doing something, as in **Davaj pojdyom v kino** (duh-*vahy* pahy-*dyom* v kee-*noh*; let's go to the movies), and to answer "sure, let's do it!" (**Davaj!**) Used by itself, **davaj** means "bye, take care." (See Chapter 7 for more details.)

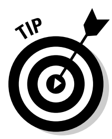
Pryedstav'tye Syebye

While the verb **pryedstav'tye** can mean "imagine," "picture," or even "introduce," **pryedstav'tye syebye** (preed-*stahf'*-tee see-*bye*) means "Can you believe it?" or "Imagine that!" It's a good way to begin telling a story, or to open a conversation on a subject you feel strongly about.

Poslushajtye!

Although the literal translation of **Poslushajtye!** (pahs-*loo*-shuhy-tee) is "Listen!," this translation doesn't do the expression justice. Saying "Listen!" in English sounds pushy and aggressive; in Russian, **Poslushajtye!** is a good and nice way to attract attention to your arguments. Here are some examples:

- **Poslushajtye, davajtye pojdyom na progulku!** (pahs-*loo*-shuhy-tee, duh-*vahy*-tee pahy-*dyom* nuh prah-*gool*-koo; You know what? Let's go for a walk!, *Literally:* Listen, let's go for a walk!)
- **Poslushajtye, no eto pryekrasnyj fil'm!** (pahs-*loo*-shuhy-tee, noh *eh*-tuh preek-*rahs*-nihy feel'm; But it's a wonderful movie!, *Literally:* Listen, but it's a wonderful movie!)



A less formal variant of the same expression is **Poslushaj!** (pahs-*loo*-shuhy). You can use it with someone you're on familiar terms with, someone you normally say **Ty** (tih; you; informal) to; see Chapter 2 for details on the informal "you." And if you want to be even more informal, you can use the conversational variant **Slushaj!** (*sloo*-shuhy) Just make sure the person you say it to is your good friend, and will take this informality the right way. Otherwise, stick to **Poslushaj!**

Pir Goroj

You may be at a loss to describe the grand abundance of Russian dinner parties and holiday tables. This expression, then, is useful: **pir goroj** (peer gah-*rohy*; *Literally:* feast with food piled up like a mountain). If you're hungry for more food info, check out Chapter 5.

Ya Tryebuyu Prodolzhyeniya Bankyeta

This phrase is a quote from one of the Russian's most beloved comedies, **"Ivan Vasil'yevich myenyayet profyessiyu"** (ee-*vahn* vah-*seel'*-ee-veech mee-*nya*-eet prah-*fye*-see-yu; Ivan Vasil'yevich Changes His Occupation), and is sure to make any Russian smile. Say **Ya tryebuyu prodolzhyeniya bankyeta!** (ya *trye*-boo-yu pruh-dahl-*zheh*-nee-ye buhn-*kye*-tuh; *Literally:* I insist on the continuation of the banquet!) when a party or a trip is going well, when somebody is inviting you to come over again, or when you're suggesting to do some fun activity yet another time.



"Ivan Vasil'yevich myenyayet profyessiyu" is an old Russian movie about a bland accountant, Ivan Vasil'yevich, who switches places with Tsar Ivan the Terrible with the help of a time machine invented by his neighbor. Confused, at first, to find himself in the position of Russia's 16th-century tsar (who turns out to be his identical twin), Ivan Vasil'yevich quickly takes to the tsar's lifestyle. Sitting in an ornate banquet hall of the old Kremlin, at the head of a huge table with endless delicacies, and watching a performance of his court dancers, Ivan Vasil'yevich, drunk from the rare wines and the attention of the beautiful tsarina, raises a precious goblet and exclaims, **Ya tryebuyu prodolzhyeniya bankyeta!**

Slovo — Syeryebro, A Molchaniye — Zoloto

Russians love proverbs and use them a lot. **Slovo — syeryebro, a molchaniye — zoloto** (*sloh*-vuh see-reeb-*roh* uh mahl-*chah*-nee-ee *zoh*-luh-tuh; a word is silver, but silence is gold) can be loosely translated as "Speaking is nice, but silence is supreme." This phrase is nice to say after you make a mistake speaking Russian or when you, or somebody else, says something that would be better off left unsaid.

Odna Golova Khorosho, A Dvye — Luchshye

Odna golova khorosho, a dvye — luchshye (ahd-*nah* guh-lah-*vah* khuh-rah-*shoh* ah dvye *looch*-shih; One head is good, but two heads are better) doesn't refer to science fiction mutants. Rather, it's a manifestation of the international belief that two heads are better than one. You can say this phrase when you invite somebody to do something together or when you ask for, or offer, help or advice.

Drug Poznayotsya V Byedye

Drug poznayotsya v byedye (drook puhz-nuh-*yot*-sye v bee-*dye*; A friend is tested by hardship) is the Russian equivalent of the saying, "A friend in need is a friend indeed."



Russians take friendship seriously. Their definition of a friend is not just a person you know (as in, "This is my new friend . . . what's your name again?"). Such a person would be called **znakomyj** (znuh-*koh*-mihy; acquaintance). A **drug** (drook; friend), on the other hand, is someone who cares for you. And the best way to find out whether a certain person is a friend or just an acquaintance is to see how they behave when things aren't going so great.

Staryj Drug Luchshye Novykh Dvukh

Staryj drug luchshye novykh dvukh (*stah*-rihy drook *looch*-shih *noh*-vihkh dvookh; An old friend is better than two new ones) is another speculation on the theme of friendship. An old friend (and they aren't referring to age) is better because he or she has already been tested, possibly by hardships mentioned in the previous phrase. New friends, on the other hand, are dark horses; when a bad moment strikes, they may turn out to be just acquaintances.

Chapter 19

Ten Russian Holidays to Remember

In This Chapter

- Finding out what holidays Russians celebrate
- Discovering what to expect on Russian holidays

Russians love holidays. You may say, “Who doesn’t?” But there’s a difference: Russians LOVE holidays — the feeling is stable and official. The government recognizes and legally acknowledges it. The difference is not only that the Russian calendar is marked by more official days off than an American one, but also that many holidays get more than one day off, because, as Russians see it, “Come on, what kind of holiday is it if you’re only celebrating for a day?” Moreover, if a holiday falls on a Thursday, the government usually shifts the working schedule around so that the remaining working Friday, inconveniently stuck between the holiday and the weekend, also becomes a day off.

These arrangements, along with proximity of some important Russian holidays in time (Christmas is seven days after the New Year, Victory Day is nine days after May Day) create monstrous holiday chunks, when businesses are closed for ten consecutive days, everybody is celebrating, and attempts to get something done are not only unsuccessful but also shunned as something highly inappropriate. All this merriment is pretty enjoyable when you’re included in the celebration but rather frustrating if you’re trying to get some official paper. Look through this chapter to find out when you’re wise to set all the business aside and celebrate.

New Year’s Night

Novyj God (*noh*-vihy goht; New Year’s) is celebrated on December 31 and definitely the main holiday in Russia. It’s the holiday to prepare for, give the biggest **podarki** (pah-*dahr*-kee; gifts) for, and celebrate for more than a week. Think Christmas, but bigger, not religious, less family-oriented, and more party fun.

Novyj God combines traditions that Americans associate with other holidays. Russian Santa Claus, **Dyed Moroz** (dyed mah-*rohs*; Grandfather Frost) comes on New Year's night. He brings along his granddaughter **Snyegurochka** (snee-*goo*-ruhch-kuh), and neither reindeer nor elves are in the picture. A Christmas tree in Russian is called a New Year's Tree — **novogodnyaya yolka** (nuh-vah-*gohd*-nee-ye *yohl*-kuh; *Literally:* New Year's pine tree).

Novogodnyaya yolka is not just a tree; it's also the name of a New Year's party for children, which is organized by all the schools, youth clubs, day care centers, and companies for their employees' children. The celebration usually consists of an interactive performance, written and staged by teachers, older students, or company enthusiasts; the traditional dance **khorovod** (khuh-rah-*voht*), when everybody holds hands and moves around the tree in circle; contests; and presents. Another surprising fact: For New Year's parties, Russians of all ages dress in costumes, just as Americans do for Halloween.

No one is supposed to stay home on New Year's night. Russians of all ages get together for New Year's parties, where they first celebrate at abundantly served tables, and then dance the night away. If the weather permits (and even if it doesn't), city authorities organize celebrations in the parks and on the main squares. You're likely to see a lot of fireworks (which you can buy on every corner), improvised **khorovody,** and people dressed up as **Dyed Moroz** riding public transportation.

Russians don't have New Year's resolutions. Instead, they make a New Year's wish, which is believed to always come true. They make it at the stroke of midnight while raising a glass of **shampanskoye** (shuhm-*pahn*-skuh-ee; champagne) — the official drink of the **Novyj God.**

If you have a chance to celebrate the **Novyj God** with Russians, do so — it's sure to be a memorable experience.

Old New Year's

Considering how much fun New Year's night is, you can understand why having just one a year isn't enough. The roots of **Staryj Novyj God** (*stah*-rihy *noh*-vihy goht; Old New Year's) go back in time to the epoch when Russia's calendar was two weeks behind the European one, thus placing New Year's day on contemporary January 14.

The celebration isn't as extensive as that of December 31 (two celebrations of that caliber would be too much even for Russians), and businesses aren't supposed to be closed on that day. Don't hope to get anything done, though; it's **Staryj Novyj God,** and no one is in the mood for work. Visit your friends, eat, and dance.

Russian Christmas

This fact may come as a surprise, but Christmas doesn't automatically mean December 25. Most Russians are Orthodox Christians, and Orthodox **Rozhdyestvo** (ruhzh-dees-*tvoh*; Christmas) is January 7. Orthodox Christianity was the first to split from the big Christian tree back in 1054. The most conspicuous features that distinguish Orthodox churches (not to go into theology) are highly ornate internal and external design, richly decorated **ikony** (ee-*koh*-nih; icons), and generous use of incense during services. On Christmas, all-night services are held in the most important Russian churches.

Those who follow the old traditions make **kutya** (koo-*t'ya*), a wheat porridge with honey, walnuts, and other ingredients, seven of them altogether; Russians believe seven to be an especially good number.

Russian Easter

Speaking of religious holidays, Russian Orthodox **Paskha** (*pahs*-khuh; Easter) doesn't coincide with Western Easter, either. **Paskha** is not only the name of the holiday, but also a special cake that Russians bake (or, more realistically, buy) for Easter. They also dye boiled **yajtsa** (*yahy*-tsuh; eggs) into cheerful colors and exchange them. On the day of Easter, instead of "Hello," Russians say to each other **Khristos voskryes!** (khrees-*tohs* vahsk-*ryes*; Christ has arisen!) The appropriate response is **Voistinu voskryes!** (vah-*ees*-tee-noo vahsk-*ryes*; He truly has!)

Women's Day

In spite of its official name, The International Day of Solidarity of Women, or, simply, **8 marta** (vahs'-*moh*-ee *mahr*-tuh; March 8), Women's Day is as far from feminism as it gets. This official day off is the day when every Russian female has a chance to "feel like a real woman." It's a mixture of Mother's Day and Valentine's Day, but more inclusive: All women, from grandmothers to neighbors to colleagues, to say nothing of mothers and sweethearts, receive flowers, gifts, and abundant compliments. This day is also the only day of the year when Russian men awkwardly cook breakfast and clean the apartment.

The Day of the Defender of the Fatherland

Dyen' zash'itnika otyechyestva (dyen' zuh-*sh'eet*-nee-kuh aht-*tye*-cheest-vuh), February 23, was initially a holiday to note men who have served or are

currently serving in the military. With time, it's become a male counterpart to Women's Day on March 8. Offices and organizations hold parties, women give presents to their male relatives and colleagues, all TV stations broadcast thematic concerts, and cities organize fireworks and open-air festivities.

Russian Mardi Gras

Maslyenitsa (*mahs*-lee-nee-tsuh) is a week of celebration right before Lent, seven weeks before Russian Easter. **Maslyenitsa** goes back to the pagan tradition of greeting the spring. The main attributes include **bliny** (blee-*nih*; pancakes), which are symbols of the sun, and open-air festivals, during which straw figures symbolizing winter are burned in bonfires.

May Day

Pyervoye Maya (*pyer*-vuh-ee *mah*-ye; May 1), started as the International Day of Solidarity of Working People, but eventually it became just another celebration of spring. On the first day of this two-day holiday, various floats, political or not, navigate down the streets of every Russian town; on the second day, everybody leaves the city for a **mayovka** (muh-*yohf*-kuh): a large-scale picnic in the lap of nature.

Victory Day

This fact is little known in the West, but the Russians took a very active part in World War II, and lost a huge number of people in it. On May 9, they celebrate **Dyen' Pobyedy** (dyen' pah-*bye*-dih; Victory Day) over Fascism with parades, fireworks, and open-air festivals.

National Unity Day

Created to replace the Day of the October Revolution (which used to be celebrated, ironically, on November 7), **Dyen' Narodnogo Yedinstva** (dyen' nuh-*rohd*-nuh-vuh ee-*deenst*-vuh; National Unity Day), celebrated on November 4, commemorates the events of 1612, when two Moscow merchants called for the unity of Russian citizens in the effort to liberate Moscow from Polish-Swedish troops. It's another occasion for parades, fireworks, and open-air festivals.

Chapter 20

Ten Phrases That Make You Sound Russian

In This Chapter

- Finding out what to say to really fit in with Russians
- Discovering traditions that help you understand Russians better

Some phrases aren't really important in a conversation. They don't really mean anything, and you can get your point across without using them. Not coincidentally, these phrases also make native speakers hit you approvingly on the back and say, "Yeah, buddy, you're one of us." A book doesn't teach you these phrases — unless the book is *Russian For Dummies.* In this chapter, you find insider's information on ten phrases that make you sound Russian.

Tol'ko Poslye Vas!

Oh, dear Old World! Russians still believe in opening doors for each other and letting others go first. If you want to be especially polite, absolutely refuse to go through a door if somebody else is aiming for it. Instead of just walking through and getting it over with, stand by the door for 15 minutes repeating **Tol'ko poslye vas!** (*tohl'*-kuh *pohs*-lee vahs; Only after you!) while your counterpart stands by the other side of the door repeating the same phrase. It may be time consuming, but it's very rewarding in the long run; you'll be recognized as a well-bred and very nice individual.

Vy Syegodnya Pryekrasno Vyglyaditye!

Speaking of being old-fashioned: Russians, for some reason, don't believe that giving compliments is considered sexual harassment. So, if you start a conversation with a Russian woman by saying **Vy syegodnya pryekrasno vyglyaditye!** (vih see-*vohd*-nye pree-*krahs*-nuh *vihg*-lee-dee-tee; You look great today!),

she may actually treat you nicer instead of reporting you to the authorities. It's hard to believe, but this exact phrase is considered appropriate with colleagues, shop assistants, and hotel receptionists. Just remember to stop using the phrase after you leave Russia if you want to avoid criminal charges.

If someone says **Vy syegodnya pryekrasno vyglyaditye!** to you, remember that the appropriate response isn't **spasibo** (spuh-*see*-buh; thank you); you should say **Nu, chto vy!** (noo shtoh vih; Ah, what are you talking about!) You have to show your modesty and disagree.

Zakhoditye Na Chaj!

Making a Russian friend is very easy. When you meet someone (and if you like this person enough to want to be his or her friend), don't think too hard about finding a way to create a social connection. Just say **Zakhoditye na chaj!** (zuh-khah-*dee*-tee nuh chahy; Stop by for some tea!) The person won't think you're a freak or a serial killer; he or she will most likely take your offer at face value. Keep in mind, though, that unlike "Let's do lunch," Russians take **Zakhoditye na chaj** seriously and usually accept your offer. That being said, you should actually have some tea and cookies at home, because **Zakhoditye na chaj!** implies drinking tea and conversing, unlike the American version: "Would you like to stop by my place for a drink?"

Ugosh'ajtyes'!

When you invite a new friend over for tea and whip out your strategically prepared box of cookies, a nice thing to say is **Ugosh'ajtyes!** (oo-gah-*sh'ahy*-tees'; Help yourself! *Literally:* Treat yourself!) Besides being friendly and polite, this word is just long enough to scare off foreigners. Which is, of course, a good enough reason to learn it and stand out in the crowd.

Priyatnogo Appetita!

Unless you want to strike people as a gloomy, misanthropic sociopath, don't start eating without wishing others **Priyatnogo appetita!** (pree-*yat*-nuh-vuh uh-pee-*tee*-tuh; Bon appetit!) Don't hesitate to say this phrase to people you don't know and are seeing for the first time in your life after your waiter sits them down at your table in an over-crowded restaurant.

Syadyem Na Dorozhku!

Before departing on a trip, surprise everybody by looking around thoughtfully and saying **Syadyem na dorozhku!** (*sya*-deem nuh dah-*rohsh*-koo; Let's sit down before hitting the road!) Essentially a superstition, this tradition is actually useful; sitting down and staying silent for a minute before you head out the door gives you an opportunity to remember what's important. Maybe your packed lunch is still in the fridge, and your plane tickets with a sticker saying "Don't forget!" are still on your bedside table!

Sadis', V Nogakh Pravdy Nyet

Sitting down is a big deal for Russians. Which is, of course, understandable: With those vast lands, they must have had to walk a lot (especially before the invention of trains). That's why when you're sitting with somebody standing before you, or when somebody stops by and hangs out in the doorway, claiming to be leaving in a minute, you can say **Sadis', v nogakh pravdy nyet.** (sah-*dees'*, v nah-*gahkh prahv*-dih nyet; Sit down, there is no truth in feet.) This phrase doesn't make much sense in English. And Russians most likely don't believe that more truth exists in other parts of the body than in the feet. The phrase, however, is a nice hospitality token, and it definitely wins you some "native-speaker" points.

Ni Pukha, Ni Pyera!

Although English has its own cute little "Break a leg" phrase, nobody really uses it anymore. Russians, on the other hand, never let anyone depart on a mission — whether a lady leaves to interview for a job or guy goes to ask a girl out — without saying **Ni pukha, ni pyera!** (nee *poo*-khuh nee pee-*rah*; Good luck! *Literally:* Have neither fluff nor plume!)

The appropriate response isn't **spasibo** (spuh-*see*-buh; thank you); you should say **K chyortu!** (k *chohr*-too; To the devil!) We have no clear explanation for where this response came from. The **chyort** (chohrt; petty devil) part of the phrase represents a very popular character in Russian folklore. He's mentioned in a variety of expressions, such as **u chyorta na kulichkakh** (oo *chohr*-tuh nuh koo-*leech*-kuhkh; far away, *Literally:* at the devil's Easter celebration) or **chyortova dyuzhina** (*chohr*-tuh-vuh *dyu*-zhih-nuh; number 13, *Literally:* devil's dozen). The most common way **chyort** appears is in **Idi k chyortu!** (ee-*dee* k *chohr*-too; Go to the devil!) As you can tell, **K chyortu!**

sounds suspiciously close to an insult. In any other situation, **K chyortu!** would sound offensive. Responding to **Ni pukha, ni pyera!** in this manner is a precious opportunity to send the devil someone you always wanted to get rid of but were afraid to. Just be sure to smile while responding!

Tseluyu

Russians sign their letters, e-mails, and cell-phone text messages with **Tseluyu** (tsih-*loo*-yu; kisses, *Literally:* [I am] kissing [you]). You can also say **Tseluyu** at the end of a phone conversation. We don't recommend saying it in person, though: if you're face to face with someone, you may as well kiss the person instead of talking about it!



Russians are known for kissing socially. Like folks in France, Russians kiss on the cheek; unlike folks in France, Russians do it three times (because three, much like seven, is a lucky number). Social kissing is such an accepted practice in Russia that one Soviet leader caused a considerable international scandal when he whole-heartedly kissed a Western leader. Doesn't sound too scandalous? Well, being old and clumsy, the Soviet leader missed his cheek and kissed his counterpart on the mouth!

S Lyogkim Parom!

Here's a weird one: When Russians see someone who just came out of a shower, a sauna, or any place where you can, supposedly, clean yourself, they say **S lyogkim parom!** (s *lyokh*-keem *pah*-ruhm; *Literally:* Congratulations on a light steam!) This phrase is very popular, especially after it became the title of the token Russian New Year's night movie **"Ironiya sud'by, ili s lyogkim parom!"** (ee-*roh*-nee-ye sood'-*bih ee*-lee s *lyokh*-keem *pah*-ruhm; The Irony of Fate, or Congratulations on a light steam!) This romantic comedy, shown by pretty much every Russian television channel on December 31, starts in a Russian **banya** (*bah*-nye; sauna), which triggers all the adventures that follow. (See Chapter 19 for more about Russian holidays.)

You can use **S lyogkim parom!** humorously: Say it to someone who got caught in the rain or someone who spilled a drink. Yes, it sounds mean, but Russians have a dark sense of humor.

Chapter 21

Ten Things Never to Say or Do in Russia

In This Chapter

- Exploring Russian social taboos
- Picking up some tips on proper behavior in Russia

Every culture has its Do's and Don'ts. In Chapters 18 through 20, we discuss the do's. Sometimes, knowing what NOT to do is even more important if you want to fit in or at least produce a good impression. Read on to find out about ten Russian social taboos.

Don't Come to Visit Empty-Handed

If you're invited over for dinner, or just for a visit, don't come to a Russian house with empty hands. What you bring doesn't really matter — a box of chocolates, flowers, or a small toy for a child, just as long as you don't come **s pustymi rukami** (s poos-*tih*-mee roo-*kah*-mee; empty-handed). The hosts usually prepare for a visit by cooking their best dishes and buying delicacies that they normally wouldn't buy for themselves. If, after all this effort, a guest shows up without even a flower, Russians believe he doesn't care. They won't say anything, but the dinner will leave an unpleasant aftertaste.

Don't Leave Your Shoes On in Someone's Home

Russian apartments are covered in rugs. Often, they're expensive Persian rugs with intricate designs, which aren't cleaned as easily as traditional American carpeting. Besides, Russians walk a lot through dusty streets, instead of just stepping from the car directly into the home. For these reasons, and also because this tradition has gone on for centuries, Russians take

off their street shoes when they enter private residencies. The host usually offers a pair of **tapochki** (*tah*-puhch-kee; slippers); if you go to a party, women usually bring a pair of nice shoes to wear inside. And again, if you fail to take your shoes off, nobody will say anything; you're the guest, so you can do pretty much whatever you want. But sneak a peek: Are you the only person wearing your snow-covered boots at the dinner table?

Don't Joke about the Parents

Russians aren't politically correct. They casually make jokes that may cause you to cringe in your seat. No sensitive issue is spared, so you better prepare yourself. Parents, however, are the one thing that Russians just don't make jokes about, and they don't tolerate anyone else doing it either. So, go ahead and tell an **anyekdot** (uh-neek-*doht*; joke) based on ethnicity, appearance, or gender stereotypes; just steer clear of jokes about somebody's mother or father. You won't be understood.

Don't Toast with "Na Zdorov'ye!"

People who don't speak Russian usually think that they know one Russian phrase: a toast, **Na Zdorov'ye!** Little do they know that **Na Zdorov'ye!** (nuh zdah-*rohv'*-ee; for health) is what Russians say when somebody thanks them for a meal. In Polish, indeed, **Na Zdorov'ye!** or something close to it, is a traditional toast. Russians, on the other hand, like to make up something long and complex, such as, **Za druzhbu myezhdu narodami!** (zah *droozh*-boo *myezh*-doo nuh-*roh*-duh-mee; To friendship between nations!) If you want a more generic Russian toast, go with **Za Vas!** (zuh vahs; To you!)

Don't Take the Last Shirt

A Russian saying, **otdat' poslyednyuyu rubashku** (aht-*daht'* pahs-*lyed*-nyu-yu roo-*bahsh*-koo; to give away one's last shirt), makes the point that you have to be giving, no matter what the expense for yourself. In Russia, offering guests whatever they want is considered polite. Those wants don't just include food or accommodations; old-school Russians offer you whatever possessions you comment on, like a picture on the wall, a vase, or a sweater.

Now, being offered something doesn't necessarily mean you should take it. Russians aren't offering something because they want to get rid of it; they're offering because they want to do something nice for you. So, unless you feel that plundering their home is a good idea, don't just take things offered to you and leave. Refuse first, and do so a couple of times, because your hosts

will insist. And only accept the gift if you really want this special something, but then return the favor and give your hosts something nice, as well.

Don't Underdress

Russians dress up on more occasions than Americans do. Even to go for a casual walk, a Russian woman may wear high heels and a nice dress. A hardcore feminist may say women do this because they're victimized and oppressed. But Russian women themselves explain it this way, "We only live once; I want to look and feel my best." Who can blame them?

On some occasions, all foreigners, regardless of gender, run the risk of being the most underdressed person in the room. These occasions include dinner parties and trips to the theater. Going to a restaurant is also considered a festive occasion, and you don't want to show up in your jeans and T-shirt, no matter how informal you think the restaurant may be. In any case, checking on the dress code before going out somewhere is a good idea.

Don't Go Dutch

Here's where Russians differ strikingly from Western Europeans. They don't go Dutch. So, if you ask a lady out, don't expect her to pay for herself, not at a restaurant or anywhere else. You can, of course, suggest that she pay, but that usually rules out the possibility of seeing her again. She may not even have money on her. Unless they expect to run into a maniac and have to escape through the back exit, Russian women wouldn't think of bringing money when going out with a man.

And for our female readers: Even if your Russian male friend lives on a scholarship of $100 a month, he will insist on paying for everything. And if he doesn't at least insist, we recommend taking a closer look at him. Having a woman pay is a strong taboo in Russia; you may want to wonder why this man chooses to break it.

Don't Let a Woman Carry Something Heavy

This rule may make politically correct people cringe, but Russians believe that a man is physically stronger than a woman. Therefore, they believe a man who watches a woman carry something heavy without helping her is impolite.

When you see a woman (or an elderly person) carrying something heavy, offer your help with this phrase: **Razryeshitye vam pomoch'!** (ruhz-ree-*shih*-tee vahm pah-*mohch*; Let me help you!) or simply **Vam pomoch'?** (vahm pah-*mohch*; Shall I help you?) If you're offered help, you can either accept it with **Bol'shoye spasibo!** (bahl'-*shoh*-ee spuh-*see*-buh; Thank you very much!) or refuse it with **Nyet, spasibo!** (nyet spuh-*see*-buh; No, thank you!)

Don't Overlook the Elderly on Public Transportation

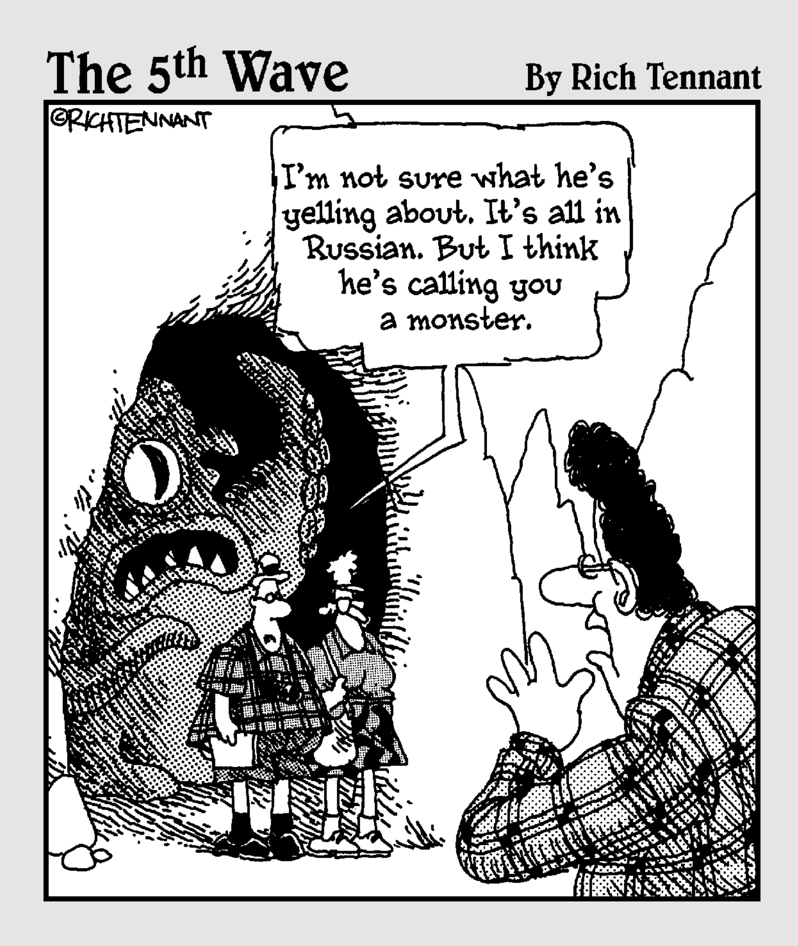
When Russians come to America and ride public transportation, they're very confused to see young people sitting when an elderly person is standing nearby. They don't understand that in America, an elderly person may be offended when offered a seat. Well, you don't need to worry about that in Russia. Their elderly people and pregnant women won't be offended if you offer them a seat on a bus. In fact, if you don't, the entire bus looks at you as if you're a criminal. Women, even (or should we say, especially) young ones, are also offered seats on public transportation. But that's optional. Getting up and offering a seat to an elderly person, on the other hand, is a must.

Don't Burp in Public

We hate to bring it up . . . And we're sure that this suggestion doesn't, of course, apply to our readers. But maybe you know someone you can give this piece of advice to. Know that bodily functions, such as getting rid of excess gas (yes, we're talking about burping!), are considered extremely impolite in public, even if the sound is especially long and expressive, and the author is proud of it.

Moreover, if the incident happens (we're all human), don't apologize. By apologizing, you acknowledge your authorship, and attract more attention to the fact. Meanwhile, Russians, terrified by what just happened, pretend they didn't notice, or silently blame it on the dog. Obviously, these people are in denial. But if you don't want to be remembered predominantly for this incident, steer clear of natural bodily functions in public.

Part V
Appendixes



In this part . . .

The appendixes in Part V give you easy-to-use Russian reference sources. We include a sample list of commonly used regular and irregular Russian verbs with their conjugations. We provide you with a mini-dictionary with some of the words you use most often. We give you an answer key to all the Fun & Games sections that appear at the end of the chapters in this book. And finally, we list the tracks of the audio CD included with this book so you can read along and practice as you listen to real-world conversation of native Russian speakers.

Appendix A
Verb Tables

Regular Russian Verbs

Regular Verbs Ending with –at'
For example: dyelat' (to do, to make)

	Present	Past	Future
ya (I)	dyelayu	dyelal/dyelala	budu dyelat'
ty (you sing./ inform.)	dyelayesh'	dyelal/dyelala	budyesh' dyelat'
on/ona/ono (he/she/it)	dyelayet	dyelal/dyelala/ dyelalo	budyet dyelat'
my (we)	dyelayem	dyelali	budyem dyelat'
vy (you pl./form.)	dyelayetye	dyelali	budyetye dyelat'
oni (they)	dyelayut	dyelali	budut dyelat'

Regular Verbs Ending with –it'
For example: govorit' (to talk)

	Present	Past	Future
ya (I)	govoryu	govoril/govorila	budu govorit'
ty (you sing./ inform.)	govorish'	govoril/govorila	budyesh' govorit'
on/ona/ono (he/she/it)	govorit	govoril/govorila/ govorilo	budyet govorit'
my (we)	govorim	govorili	budyem govorit'
vy (you pl./form.)	govoritye	govorili	budyetye govorit'
oni (they)	govoryat	govorili	budut govorit'

Irregular Russian Verbs

byt'
to be

	Present	Past	Future
ya	None	byl/byla	budu
ty	None	byl/byla	budyesh'
on/ona/ono	None	byl/byla/bylo	budyet
my	None	byli	budyem
vy	None	byli	budyetye
oni	None	byli	budut

moch'
to be able, can

	Present	Past	Future
ya	mogu	mog/mogla	smogu
ty	mozhyesh'	mog/mogla	smozhyesh'
on/ona/ono	mozhyet	mog/mogla/moglo	smozhyet
my	mozhyem	mogli	smozhyem
vy	mozhyetye	mogli	smozhyetye
oni	mogut	mogli	smogut

zhit'
to live

	Present	Past	Future
ya	zhivu	zhil/zhila	budu zhit'
ty	zhivyosh'	zhil/zhila	budyesh' zhit'
on/ona/ono	zhivyot	zhil/zhila/zhilo	budyet zhit'
my	zhivyom	zhili	budyem zhit'
vy	zhivyotye	zhili	budyetye zhit'
oni	zhivut	zhili	budut zhit'

yest'
to eat

	Present	Past	Future
ya	yem	yel/yela	budu yest'
ty	yesh'	yel/yela	budyesh' yest'
on/ona/ono	yest	yel/yela/yelo	budyet yest'
my	yedim	yeli	budyem yest'
vy	yeditye	yeli	budyetye yest'
oni	yedyat	yeli	budut yest'

pit'
to drink

	Present	Past	Future
ya	p'yu	pil/pila	budu pit'
ty	p'yosh'	pil/pila	budyesh' pit'
on/ona/ono	p'yot	pil/pila/pilo	budyet pit'
my	p'yom	pili	budyem pit'
vy	p'yotye	pili	budyetye pit'
oni	p'yut	pili	budut pit'

khotyet'
to want

	Present	Past	Future
ya	khochu	khotyel/khotyela	budu khotyet'
ty	khochyesh'	khotyel/khotyela	budyesh' khotyet'
on/ona/ono	khochyet	khotyel/khotyela/khotyelo	budyet khotyet'
my	khotim	khotyeli	budyem khotyet'
vy	khotitye	khotyeli	budyetye khotyet'
oni	khotyat	khotyeli	budut khotyet'

lyubit'
to love, to like

	Present	Past	Future
ya	lyublyu	lyubil/lyubila	budu lyubit'
ty	lyubish'	lyubil/lyubila	budyesh' lyubit'
on/ona/ono	lyubit	lyubil/lyubila/lyubilo	budyet lyubit'
my	lyubim	lyubili	budyem lyubit'
vy	lyubitye	lyubili	budyetye lyubit'
oni	lyubyat	lyubili	budut lyubit'

		Present	Past	Future
platit'	*ya*	plachu	platil/platila	budu platit'
to pay	*ty*	platish'	platil/platila	budyesh' platit'
	on/ona/ono	platit	platil/platila/ platilo	budyet platit'
	my	platim	platili	budyem platit'
	vy	platitye	platili	budyetye platit'
	oni	platyat	platili	budut platit'

		Present	Past	Future
vidyet'	*ya*	vizhu	vidyel/vidyela	budu vidyet'
to see	*ty*	vidish'	vidyel/vidyela	budyesh' vidyet'
	on/ona/ono	vidit	vidyel/vidyela/ vidyelo	budyet vidyet'
	my	vidim	vidyeli	budyem vidyet'
	vy	viditye	vidyeli	budyetye vidyet'
	oni	vidyat	vidyeli	budut vidyet'

		Present	Past	Future
pisat'	*ya*	pishu	pisal/pisala	budu pisat'
to write	*ty*	pishyesh'	pisal/pisala	budyesh' pisat'
	*on/ona/*ono	pishyet	pisal/pisala/ pisalo	budyet pisat'
	my	pishyem	pisali	budyem pisat'
	vy	pishyetye	pisali	budyetye pisat'
	oni	pishut	pisali	budut pisat'

Russian-English Mini-Dictionary

A

adryes (*ahd*-rees) m: address
aeroport (uh-eh-ruh-*pohrt*) m: airport
apryel' (uhp-*ryel'*) m: April
avgust (*ahv*-goost) m: August
avtobus (uhf-*toh*-boos) m: bus

B

babushka (*bah*-boosh-kuh) f: grandmother
balyet (buh-*lyet*) m: ballet
bank (bahnk) m: bank
bilyet (bee-*lyet*) m: ticket
bol'nitsa (bahl'-*nee*-tsuh) f: hospital
bol'shoj (bahl'-*shohy*): big
bolyen (*boh*-leen): ill
brat (braht) m: brother
brat'/vzyat'(braht'/vzyat'): to take
bryuki (*bryu*-kee): pants
butylka (boo-*tihl*-kuh) f: bottle
byelyj (*bye*-lihy): white
byt' (biht'): to be

C

chas (chahs) m: hour
chashka (*chahsh*-kuh) f: cup
chasy (chuh-*sih*): clock
chistyj (*chees*-tihy): clear
chitat'/prochitat' (chee-*taht'*/pruh-chee-*taht'*): to read
chto (shtoh): what
chto-to (*shtoh*-tuh): something
chyek (chyek) m: check
chyemodan (chee-mah-*dahn*) m: suitcase
chyetvyerg (cheet-*vyerk*) m: Thursday
chyornyj (*chohr*-nihy): black

D

dalyeko (duh-lee-*koh*): far
davat'/dat' (duh-*vaht'/*daht'): to give
dlinnyj (*dlee*-nihy): long
do svidaniya (duh svee-*dah*-nee-ye): goodbye
doch' (dohch') f: daughter
dolzhyen (*dohl*-zhihn): to have to
dom (dohm) m: home, house
dorogoj (duh-rah-*gohy*): dear, expensive
dostavat'/dostat' (duhs-tuh-*vaht'/duhs-taht'*): to get
dozhd' (dohsht') m: rain
drug (drook) m: friend
dumat' (*doo*-muht'): to think
dvoryets (dvah-*ryets*) m: palace
dvyer' (dvyer') f: door
dyedushka (*dye*-doosh-kuh) f: grandfather
dyekabr' (dee-*kahbr'*) m: December

dyelat'/sdyelat' (*dye*-luht'/*sdye*-luht'): to do, to make

dyen' (dyen') m: day

dyen'gi (*dyen'*-gee): money

dyeshyovyj (dee-*shoh*-vihy): cheap

dyesyert (dee-*syert*) m: dessert

dyevochka (*dye*-vuhch-kuh) f: girl

dzhinsy (*dzhihn*-sih): jeans

F

faks (fahks) m: fax

firma (*feer*-muh) f: firm

frukty (*frook*-tih) m: fruits

fyevral' (feev-*rahl'*) m: February

G

galstuk (*gahls*-took) m: tie

gazyeta (guh-*zye*-tuh) f: newspaper

gdye (gdye): where

glavnyj (*glahv*-nihy): main

god (goht) m: year

golova (guh-lah-*vah*) f: head

gora (gah-*rah*) f: mountain

gorod (*goh*-ruht) m: city

gost' (gohst') m: guest

gostinitsa (gahs-*tee*-nee-tsuh) f: hotel

I

idti/khodit' (eet-*tee*/khah-*deet'*): to go by foot

igrat' (eeg-*raht'*): to play

imyeil (ee-*meh*-eel) m: e-mail

imya (*ee*-mye) n: name

imyet' (ee-*myet'*): to have

indyex (*een*-dehks) m: zip code

inostrannyj (ee-nah-*strah*-nihy): foreign

intyeryes (een-tee-*ryes*) m: interest

iyul' (ee-*yul'*) m: July

iyun' (ee-*yun'*) m: June

iz (ees): from

K

kak (kahk): how

kassa (*kah*-suh) f: cash register

khlyeb (khlyep) m: bread

kholodnyj (khah-*lohd*-nihy): cold

khoroshij (khah-*roh*-shihy): good

khorosho (khuh-rah-*shoh*) m: all right, well

khotyet' (khah-*tyet'*): to want

kino (kee-*noh*) n: movie theater

klub (kloop) m: club

kniga (*knee*-guh) f: book

kofye (*koh*-fee) m: coffee

kogda (kahg-*dah*): when

kolyeno (kah-*lye*-nuh) n: knee

komnata (*kohm*-nuh-tuh) f: room

kompaniya (kahm-*pah*-nee-ye) f: company

konyets (kah-*nyets*) m: end

korichnyevyj (kah-*reech*-nee-vihy): brown

kostyum (kahs-*tyum*) m: suit

kot (koht) m: cat

kotoryj (kah-*toh*-rihy): which

krasivyj (kruh-*see*-vihy): beautiful

krasnyj (*krahs*-nihy): red

krovat' (krah-*vaht'*) f: bed

kryeditnaya kartochka (kree-*deet*-nuh-ye *kahr*-tuhch-kuh) f: credit card

kto (ktoh): who

kurtka (*koort*-kuh) f: jacket

kvartira (kvuhr-*tee*-ruh) f: apartment

L

litso (lee-*tsoh*) n: face
lozhka (*lohsh*-kuh) f: spoon
lyegko (leekh-*koh*): easy
lyekarstvo (lee-*kahrst*-vuh) n: medicine
lyetat'/lyetyet' (lee-*taht'*/lee-*tyet'*): to fly
lyeto (*lye*-tuh) n: summer
lyubit' (lyu-*beet'*): to love
lyudi (*lyu*-dee): people

M

magazin (muh-guh-*zeen*) m: shop
maj (mahy) m: May
mal'chik (*mahl'*-cheek) m: boy
malyen'kij (*mah*-leen'-keey): small
mart (mahrt) m: March
mashina (muh-*shih*-nuh) f: car
mat' (maht') f: mother
militsiya (mee-*lee*-tsih-ye) f: police
minuta (mee-*noo*-tuh) f: minute
moch'/smohch' (mohch'/smohch'): can
moj (mohy) m: my
molodoj (muh-lah-*dohy*): young
moloko (muh-lah-*koh*) n: milk
morye (*moh*-ree) n: sea
most (mohst) m: bridge
muzh (moosh) m: husband
muzhchina (moo-*sh'ee*-nuh) m: man
muzyej (moo-*zyey*) m: museum
my (mih): we
myaso (*mya*-suh) n: meat
myedsyestra (meet-sees-*trah*) f: nurse
myesto (*myes*-tuh) n: seat
myesyats (*mye*-seets) m: month
myetro (meet-*roh*) n: subway

N

nakhodit'/najti (nuh-khah-*deet'*/nahy-*tee*): to find
nalichnyye (nuh-*leech*-nih-ee): cash
nalyevo (nuh-*lye*-vuh): (to the) left
napravo (nuh-*prah*-vuh): (to the) right
nikogda (nee-kahg-*dah*): never
no (noh): but
noch' (nohch') f: night
noga (nah-*gah*) f: leg
nomyer (*noh*-meer) m: number
nos (nohs) m: nose
nosit' (nah-*seet'*): wear
novyj (*noh*-vihy): new
noyabr' (nah-*yabr'*) m: November
nozh (nohsh) m: knife
nravit'sya/ponravit'sya (*nrah*-veet-sye/pah-*nrah*-veet-sye): to like
nyedyelya (nee-*dye*-lye) f: week

O

obyed (ah-*byet*) m: lunch
offis (*oh*-fees) m: office
ofitsiant (uh-fee-tsih-*ahnt*) m: waiter
okno (ahk-*noh*) n: window
oktyabr' (ahk-*tyabr'*) m: October
on (ohn): he
ona (ah-*nah*): she
oni (ah-*nee*): they
ono (ah-*noh*): it
osyen' (*oh*-seen') f: fall
otdyel (aht-*dyel*) m: department
otpusk (*oht*-poosk) m: vacation
otyets (ah-*tyets*) f: father
ovosh'i (*oh*-vuh-sh'ee): vegetables

P

p'yesa (*p'ye*-suh) f: play

pal'to (puhl'-*toh*) n: coat

pasport (*pahs*-puhrt) m: passport

pis'mo (pees'-*moh*) n: letter

pit'/vypit' (peet'/*vih*-peet'): to drink

pivo (*pee*-vuh) n: beer

plash' (plahsh') m: raincoat

plat'ye (*plaht'*-ee) f: dress

platit'/zaplatit' (pluh-*teet'*/zuh-pluh-*teet'*): pay

plokhoj (plah-*khohy*): bad

pochyemu (puh-chee-*moo*): why

podarok (pah-*dah*-ruhk) m: gift

pokazyvat'/pokazat' (pah-*kah*-zih-vuht'/puh-kuh-*zaht'*): to show

pokupat'/kupit'(puh-koo-*paht'/*koo-*peet'*): to buy

pomogat'/pomoch' (puh-mah-*gaht'/* pah-*mohch'*): to help

ponyedyel'nik (puh-nee-*dyel'*-neek) m: Monday

povorachivat'/povyernut' (puh-vah-*rah*-chee-vuht'/puh-veer-*noot'*): to turn

poyezd (*poh*-eest) m: train

pozdno (*pohz*-nuh): late

pozhalujsta (pah-*zhahl*-stuh): please, you're welcome

pozhar (pah-*zhahr*) m: fire

prikhodit'/pridti (pree-khah-*deet'/*preet-*tee*): to come

prinosit'/prinyetsi (pree-nah-*seet'/*pree-nees-*tee*): to bring

privyet (pree-*vyet*): hi

problyema (prahb-*lye*-muh) f: problem

prodavat'/prodat'(pruh-duh-*vaht'/*prah-*daht'*): to sell

prodavyets (pruh-duh-*vyets*): m: sales assistant

pryedstavlyat'/pryedstavit' (preet-stuhv-*lyat'*/preet-*stah*-veet'): to introduce

putyeshyestvovat' (poo-tee-*shehst*-vuh-vuht'): to travel

pyatnitsa (*pyat*-nee-tsuh) f: Friday

R

rabota (ruh-*boh*-tuh) f: work; job

rabotat' (ruh-*boh*-tuht'): to work

rano (*rah*-nuh): early

rasprodazha (ruhs-prah-*dah*-zhuh) f: sale

rasskazyvat'/rasskazat' (ruhs-*kah*-zih-vuht'/ruhs-kuh-*zaht'*): to tell

ris (rees) m: rice

rubashka (roo-*bahsh*-kuh) f: shirt

ruka (roo-*kah*) f: arm, hand

ryba (*rih*-buh) f: fish

ryebyonok (ree-*byo*-nuhk) m: child

ryeka (ree-*kah*) f: river

ryestoran (rees-tah-*rahn*) m: restaurant

rynok (*rih*-nuhk) m: market

S

sakhar (*sah*-khuhr) m: sugar

salat (suh-*laht*) m: salad

samolyot (suh-mah-*lyot*) m: airplane

sdacha (*sdah*-chuh) f: change

shapka (*shahp*-kuh) f: hat

shkola (*shkoh*-luh) f: school

shtat (shtaht) m: state

shyeya (*sheh*-ye) f: neck

sidyet' (see-*dyet'*): to sit

sinij (*see*-neey): blue

skazat' (skuh-*zaht'*): to say

skol'ko (*skohl'*-kuh): how many, how much

skuchnyj (*skoosh*-nihy): boring

sladkij (*slaht*-keey): sweet

slishkom (*sleesh*-kuhm): too (excessively)

slovo (*sloh*-vuh) n: word

smotryet'/posmotryet' (smaht-*ryet'*/ puhs-mah-*tryet'*): to look, to watch

smyeyat'sya (smee-*yat*-sye): to laugh

snimat' (snee-*maht'*): to rent

snyeg (snyek) m: snow

sobirat'/sobrat' (sub-bee-*raht'*/sahb-*raht'*): to collect

sol' (sohl') f: salt

spasibo (spuh-*see*-buh): thank you

spat' (spaht'): to sleep

spina (spee-*nah*) f: back

sport (spohrt) m: sports

sprashivat'/sprosit'(*sprah*-shih-vuht'/sprah-*seet'*): to ask

sryeda (sree-*dah*) f: Wednesday

stakan (stuh-*kahn*) m: glass

staryj (*stah*-rihy): old

stoyat' (stah-*yat'*): to stand

strana (struh-*nah*) f: country

subbota (soo-*boh*-tuh) f: Saturday

sumka (*soom*-kuh) f: bag

suvyenir (soo-vee-*neer*) m: souvenir

syegodnya (see-*vohd*-nye): today

syejchas (see-*chahs*): now

syekryetar' (seek-ree-*tahr'*) m: secretary

syem'ya (seem'-*ya*) f: family

syentyabr' (seen-*tyabr'*) m: September

syeryj (*sye*-rihy): gray

syestra (seest-*rah*) f: sister

syevyer (*sye*-veer) n: north

syn (sihn) m: son

syr (sihr) m: cheese

T

tamozhnya (tuh-*mohzh*-nye) f: customs

taryelka (tuh-*ryel*-kuh) f: plate

tol'ko (*tohl'*-kuh): only

tozhye (*toh*-zhih): also

tsvyet (tsvyet) m: color

tsyena (tsih-*nah*) f: price

tsyerkov' (*tsehr*-kuhf') f: church

tufli (*toof*-lee): shoes

tut (toot): here

ty (tih): you (singular, informal)

tyeatr (tee-*ahtr*) m: theater

tyelyefon (tee-lee-*fohn*) m: phone

tyepyer' (tee-*pyer'*): now

tyerapyevt (teh-ruh-*pehft*) m: physician

tyoplyj (*tyop*-lihy): warm

U

uchityel' (oo-*chee*-teel') m: teacher

ukhodit'/ujti (oo-khah-*deet'*/ooy-*tee*): to leave

ulitsa (*oo*-lee-tsuh) f: street

univyersityet (oo-nee-veer-see-*tyet*) m: university

utro (*oot*-ruh) n: morning

uzhin (*oo*-zhihn) m: dinner

V

vazhnyj (*vahzh*-nihy): important

vchyera (fchee-*rah*): yesterday

vidyet' (*vee*-deet'): to see

vilka (*veel*-kuh) f: fork

vino (vee-*noh*) n: wine

viza (*vee*-zuh) f: visa

vkhod (vkhoht) m: entrance

vkhodit'/vojti (vkhah-*deet'*/vahy-*tee*): to enter

voda (vah-*dah*) f: water

vokzal (vahk-*zahl*) m: station

volosy (*voh*-luh-sih): hair

vopros (vahp-*rohs*) m: question

voskryesyen'ye (vuhs-kree-*syen*'-ee) n: Sunday

vostok (vahs-*tohk*) m: east

vrach (vrahch) m: doctor

vryemya (*vrye*-mye) n: time

vstryecha (*vstrye*-chuh) f: meeting

vsye (fsye): everybody

vsyo (fsyo): everything

vtornik (*ftohr*-neek) m: Tuesday

vy (vih): you (plural, formal)

vyechyer (*vye*-cheer) m: evening

vyechyerinka (vee-chee-*reen*-kuh) f: party

vyesh' (vyesh') f: thing

vyesna (vees-*nah*) f: spring

vykhod (*vih*-khuht): exit

vysokij (vih-*soh*-keey): high, tall

Y

ya (ya): I

yanvar' (een-*vahr'*) m: January

yeda (ee-*dah*) f: food

yest' (yest'): to eat

yezdit'/yekhat' (*yez*-deet'/*ye*-khuht'): to go by vehicle

yubka (*yup*-kuh) f: skirt

yug (yuk) m: south

yurist (yu-*reest*) m: lawyer

Z

zakanchivat'/zakonchit' (zuh-*kahn*-chee-vuht'/zuh-*kohn*-cheet'): finish

zapad (*zah*-puht) m: west

zavtra (*zahf*-truh): tomorrow

zavtrak (*zahf*-truhk) m: breakfast

zayavlyeniye (zuh-eev-*lye*-nee-ee) n: application

zdorov'ye (zdah-*rohv'*-ee) n: health

zdravstvujtye (*zdrah*-stvooy-tee): hello

zdyes' (zdyes'): here

zharko (*zhahr*-kuh): hot

zhdat' (zhdaht'): to wait

zhit' (zhiht'): to live

zhivot (zhih-*voht*) m: stomach

zhyena (zhih-*nah*) f: wife

zhyensh'ina (*zhehn*-sh'ee-nuh) f: woman

zhyoltyj (*zhohl*-tihy): yellow

zima (zee-*mah*) f: winter

znat' (znaht'): to know

zubnoj vrach/dantist (zoob-*nohy* vrahch/duhn-*teest*) m: dentist

zvonit'/pozvonit' (zvah-*neet'*/puh- zvah-*neet'*): to call

zyelyonyj (zee-*lyo*-nihy): green

English-Russian Mini-Dictionary

A

address: **adryes** (*ahd*-rees) m

airplane: **samolyot** (suh-mah-*lyot*) m

airport: **aeroport** (uh-eh-rah-*pohrt*) m

also: **tozhye** (*toh*-zhih)

apartment: **kvartira** (kvuhr-*tee*-ruh) f

application: **zayavlyeniye** (zuh-eev-*lye*-nee-ee) n

April: **apryel'** (uhp-*ryel'*) m

arm: **ruka** (roo-*kah*) f

ask: **sprashivat'/sprosit'** (*sprah*-shih-vuht'/sprah-*seet'*)

August: **avgust** (*ahv*-goost) m

B

back: **spina** (spee-*nah*) f

bad: **plokhoj** (plah-*khohy*)

bag: **sumka** (*soom*-kuh) f

ballet: **balyet** (buh-*lyet*) m

bank: **bank** (bahnk) m

be: **byt'** (biht')

beautiful: **krasivyj** (kruh-*see*-vihy)

bed: **krovat'** (krah-*vaht'*) f

beer: **pivo** (*pee*-vuh) n

big: **bol'shoj** (bahl'-*shohy*)

black: **chyornyj** (*chohr*-nihy)

blue: **sinij** (*see*-neey)

book: **kniga** (*knee*-guh) f

boring: **skuchnyj** (*skoosh*-nihy)

bottle: **butylka** (boo-*tihl*-kuh) f

boy: **mal'chik** (*mahl'*-cheek) m

bread: **khlyeb** (khlyep) m

breakfast: **zavtrak** (*zahf*-truhk) m

bring: **prinosit'/prinyesti** (pree-nah-*seet'*/pree-nees-*tee*)

brother: **brat'/vzyat'**(braht'/vzyat') m

brown: **korichnyevyj** (kah-*reech*-nee-vihy)

bus: **avtobus** (uhf-*toh*-boos) m

but: **no** (noh)

buy: **pokupat'/kupit'** (puh-koo-*paht'*/koo-*peet'*)

C

call: **zvonit'/pozvonit'** (zvah-*neet'*/puh-zvah-*neet'*)

can: **moch'/smoch'** (mohch'/smohch')

car: **mashina** (muh-*shih*-nuh) f

cash: **nalichnyye** (nuh-*leech*-nih-ee)

cash register: **kassa** (*kah*-suh) f

change: **sdacha** (*sdah*-chuh) f

cheap: **dyeshyovyj** (dee-*shoh*-vihy)

check: **chyek** (chyek) m

cheese: **syr** (sihr) m

child: **ryebyonok** (ree-*byo*-nuhk) m

church: **tsyerkov'** (*tsehr*-kuhf') f

city: **gorod** (*goh*-ruht) m

clock: **chasy** (chee-*sih*)

coat: **pal'to** (puhl'-*toh*) n

coffee: **kofye** (*koh*-fee) m

cold: **kholodnyj** (khah-*lohd*-nihy)

collect: **sobirat'/sobrat'** (sub-bee-*raht'*/sah-*braht'*)

come: **prikhodit'/pridti** (pree-khah-*deet'*/preet-*tee*)

company: **kompaniya** (kahm-*pah*-nee-ye) f

country: **strana** (struh-*nah*) f

credit card: **kryeditnaya kartochka** (kree-*deet*-nuh-ye *kahr*-tuhch-kuh) f

cup: **chashka** (*chahsh*-kuh) f

customs: **tamozhnya** (tuh-*mohzh*-nye) f

D

daughter: **doch'** (dohch') f

day: **dyen'** (dyen') m

dear: **dorogoj** (duh-rah-*gohy*)

December: **dyekabr'** (dee-*kahbr'*) m

dentist: **zubnoj vrach/dantist** (zoob-*nohy* vrahch/duhn-*teest*) m

department: **otdyel** (aht-*dyel*) m

dessert: **dyesyert** (dee-*syert*) m

dinner: **uzhin** (*oo*-zhihn) m

do: **dyelat'/sdyelat'** (*dye*-luht'/*sdye*-luht')

doctor: **vrach** (vrahch) m

door: **dvyer'** (dvyer') f

dress: **plat'ye** (*plaht'*-ee) n

E

early: **rano** (*rah*-nuh)

east: **vostok** (vahs-*tohk*) m

easy: **legko** (leekh-*koh*)

eat: **yest'** (yest')

e-mail: **imyeil** (ee-*meh*-eel) m

end: **konets** (kah-*nyets*) m

enter: **vkhodit'/vojti** (vkhah-*deet'*/vahy-*tee*)

entrance: **vkhod** (vkhoht) m

evening: **vyechyer** (*vye*-cheer) m

everybody: **vsye** (fsye)

everything: **vsyo** (fsyo)

exit: **vykhod** (*vih*-khuht)

expensive: **dorogoj** (duh-rah-*gohy*)

F

face: **litso** (lee-*tsoh*) n

fall: **osyen'** (*oh*-seen') f

family: **syem'ya** (seem'-*ya*) f

father: **otyets** (ah-*tyets*) m

fax: **faks** (fahks) m

February: **fevral'** (feev-*rahl'*) m

find: **nakhodit'/najti** (nuh-khah-*deet'*/nuhy-*tee*)

finish: **zakanchivat'**/**zakonchit'**(zuh-*kahn*-chee-vuht'/zuh-*kohn*-cheet')

fire: **pozhar** (pah-*zhahr*) m

firm: **firma** (*feer*-muh) f

fish: **ryba** (*rih*-buh) f

fly: **lyetat'**/**lyetyet'** (lee-*taht'*/lee-*tyet'*)

food: **yeda** (ee-*dah*) f

foreign: **inostrannyj** (ee-nahs-*trah*-nihy)

fork: **vilka** (*veel*-kuh) f

Friday: **pyatnitsa** (*pyat*-nee-tsuh) f

friend: **drug** (drook) m

from: **iz** (ees)

fruits: **frukty** (*frook*-tih) m

G

get: **dostavat'/dostat'** (duhs-tah-*vaht'*/dahs-*taht'*)

gift: **podarok** (pah-*dah*-ruhk) m

girl: **dyevochka** (*dye*-vuhch-kuh) f

give: **davat'/daht'** (duh-*vaht'*/daht')

go: **idti/yekhat'** (eet-*tee*/*ye*-khuht')

good: **khoroshij** (khah-*roh*-shihy)

goodbye: **do svidaniya** (duh svee-*dah*-nee-ye)

grandfather: **dyedushka** (*dye*-doosh-kuh) f

grandmother: **babushka** (*bah*-boosh-kuh) f

gray: **syeryj** (*sye*-rihy)

green: **zyelyonyj** (zee-*lyo*-nihy)

guest: **gost'** (gohst') m

H

hair: **volosy** (*voh*-luh-sih)

hand: **ruka** (roo-*kah*) f

hat: **shapka** (*shahp*-kuh) f

have: **imyet'** (ee-*myet'*)

have to: **dolzhyen** (*dohl*-zhihn)

he: **on** (ohn)

head: **golova** (guh-lah-*vah*) f

health: **zdorov'ye** (zdah-*rohv'*-ee) n

hello: **zdravstvujtye** (*zdrah*-stvooy-tee)

help: **pomogat'/pomoch'** (puh-mah-*gaht'*/pah-*mohch*)

here: **zdyes'/tut** (zdyes'/toot)

hi: **privyet** (pree-*vyet*)

high: **vysokij** (vih-*soh*-keey)

hospital: **bol'nitsa** (bahl'-*nee*-tsuh) f

hot: **zharko** (*zhahr*-kuh)

hotel: **gostinitsa** (gahs-*tee*-nee-tsuh) f

hour: **chas** (chahs) m

house: **dom** (dohm) m

how: **kak** (kahk)

how many, how much: **skol'ko** (*skohl'*-kuh)

husband: **muzh** (moosh) m

I

I: **ya** (ya)

ill: **bolyen** (*boh*-leen)

important: **vazhnyj** (*vahzh*-nihy)

introduce: **pryedstavlyat'/pryedstavit'** (preet-stuhv-*lyat'*/preet-*stah*-veet')

it: **ono** (ah-*noh*)

J

jacket: **kurtka** (*koort*-kuh) f

January: **yanvar'** (een-*vahr'*) m

jeans: **dzhinsy** (*dzhihn*-sih)

job: **rabota** (ruh-*boh*-tuh) f

July: **iyul'** (ee-*yul'*) m

June: **iyun'** (ee-*yun'*) m

K

knee: **kolyeno** (kah-*lye*-nuh) n

knife: **nozh** (nohsh) m

know: **znat'** (znaht')

L

late: **pozdno** (*pohz*-nuh)

laugh: **smyeyat'sya** (smee-*yat*-sye)

lawyer: **yurist** (yu-*reest*) m

leave: **ukhodit'/ujti** (oo-khah-*deet'*/ooy-*tee*)

leg: **noga** (nah-*gah*) f

letter: **pis'mo** (pees'-*moh*) n

like: **nravit'sya/ponravit'sya** (*nrah*-veet'-sye/pah-*nrah*-veet'-sye)

live: **zhit'** (zhiht')

long: **dlinnyj** (*dlee*-nihy)

look: **smotryet'/posmotryet'** (smaht-*ryet'*/puhs-mah-*tryet'*)

love: **lyubit'** (lyu-*beet'*)

lunch: **obyed** (ah-*byet*) m

M

main: **glavnyj** (*glahv*-nihy)

make: **dyelat'**/**sdyelat'**(*dye*-luht'/*sdye*-luht')

man: **muzhchina** (moo-*sh'ee*-nuh) m

March: **mart** (mahrt) m

market: **rynok** (*rih*-nuhk) m

May: **maj** (mahy) m

may: **mozhno** (*mohzh*-nuh)

meat: **myaso** (*mya*-suh) n

medicine: **lyekarstvo** (lee-*kahrst*-vuh) n

meeting: **vstryecha** (*fstrye*-chuh) f

milk: **moloko** (muh-lah-*koh*) n

minute: **minuta** (mee-*noo*-tuh) f

Monday: **ponyedyel'nik** (puh-nee-*dyel'*-neek) m

money: **dyen'gi** (*dyen'*-gee)

month: **myesyats** (*mye*-seets) m

morning: **utro** (*oot*-ruh) n

mother: **mat'** (maht') f

mountain: **gora** (gah-*rah*) f

movie theater: **kino** (kee-*noh*) n

museum: **muzyej** (moo-*zyey*) m

N

name: **imya** (*ee*-mye) n

never: **nikogda** (nee-kahg-*dah*)

new: **novyj** (*noh*-vihy)

newspaper: **gazyeta** (guh-*zye*-tuh) f

night: **noch'** (nohch') f

north: **syevyer** (*sye*-veer) n

November: **noyabr'** (nah-*yabr'*) m

now: **syejchas/tyepyer'** (see-*chahs*/tee-*pyer'*)

number: **nomyer** (*noh*-meer) m

nurse: **myedsyestra** (meet-sees-t*rah*) f

O



October: **oktyabr'** (ahk-*tyabr'*) m

office: **offis** (*oh*-fees) m

old: **staryj** (*stah*-rihy)

only: **tol'ko** (*tohl'*-kuh)

P

palace: **dvoryets** (dvah-*ryets*) m

pants: **bryuki** (*bryu*-kee)

party: **vyechyerinka** (vee-chee-*reen*-kuh) f

passport: **pasport** (*pahs*-puhrt) m

pay: **platit'**/**zaplatit'**(pluh-*teet'*/zuh-pluh-*teet'*)

people: **lyudi** (*lyu*-dee)

phone: **tyelyefon** (tee-lee-*fohn*) m

physician: **tyerapyevt** (teh-ruh-*pehft*) m

plate: **taryelka** (tuh-*ryel*-kuh) f

please: **pozhalujsta** (pah-*zhahl*-stuh)

police: **militsiya** (mee-*lee*-tsih-ye) f

price: **tsyena** (tsih-*nah*) f

problem: **problyema** (prahb-*lye*-muh) f

Q

question: **vopros** (vahp-*rohs*) m

R

rain: **dozhd'** (dohsht') m

raincoat: **plash'** (plahsh') m

read: **chitat'/prochitat'** (chee-*taht'*/pruh-chee-*taht'*)

red: **krasnyj** (*krahs*-nihy)

rent: **snimat'/snyat'** (snee-*maht'/snyat'*)

restaurant: **ryestoran** (rees-tah-*rahn*) m

river: **ryeka** (ree-*kah*) f

room: **komnata** (*kohm*-nuh-tuh) f

S

salad: **salat** (suh-*laht*) m

sale: **rasprodazha** (ruhs-prah-*dah*-zhuh) f

sales assistant: **prodavyets** (pruh-duh-*vyets*) m

salt: **sol'** (sohl') f

Saturday: **subbota** (soo-*boh*-tuh) f

say: **govorit'/skazat'** (guh-vah-*reet'*/skuh-*zaht'*)

school: **shkola** (*shkoh*-luh) f

sea: **morye** (*moh*-ree) n

seat: **myesto** (*myes*-tuh) n

see: **vidyet'/uvidet'** (*vee*-deet'/oo-*vee*-deet')

sell: **prodavat'/prodat'** (pruh-duh-*vaht'*/prah-*daht'*)

September: **syentyabr'** (seen-*tyabr'*) m

she: **ona** (ah-*nah*)

shirt: **rubashka** (roo-*bahsh*-kuh) f

shoes: **tufli** (*toof*-lee)

shop: **magazin** (muh-guh-*zeen*) m

show: **pokazyvat'/pokazat'** (pah-*kah*-zih-vuht'/puh-kuh-*zaht'*)

sister: **syestra** (sees-*trah*) f

sit: **sidyet'** (see-*dyet'*)

skirt: **yubka** (*yup*-kuh) f

sleep: **spat'** (spaht')

small: **malyen'kij** (*mah*-leen'-keey)

snow: **snyeg** (snyek) m

something: **chto-to** (*shtoh*-tuh)

son: **syn** (sihn) m

south: **yug** (yuk) m

souvenir: **suvyenir** (soo-vee-*neer*) m

spoon: **lozhka** (*lohsh*-kuh) f

sports: **sport** (spohrt) m

spring: **vyesna** (vees-*nah*) f

square: **plosh'ad'** (ploh-sh'iht') f

stand: **stoyat** (stah-*yat'*)

state: **shtat** (shtaht) m

station: **vokzal** (vahg-*zahl*) m

stomach: **zhivot** (zhih-*voht*) m

street: **ulitsa** (*oo*-lee-tsuh) f

subway: **myetro** (meet-*roh*) n

sugar: **sakhar** (*sah*-khuhr) m

suit: **kostyum** (kahs-*tyum*) m

suitcase: **chyemodan** (chee-mah-*dahn*) m

summer: **lyeto** (*lye*-tuh) n

Sunday: **voskryesyen'ye** (vuhs-kree-*syen'*-ee) n

sweet: **sladkij** (*slaht*-keey)

T

take: **brat'/vzyat'** (braht'/vzyat')

tall: **vysokij** (vih-*soh*-keey)

teacher: **uchityel'** (oo-*chee*-teel') m

tell: **rasskazyvat'/rasskazat'** (ruhs-*kah*-zih-vuht'/ruhs-kuh-*zaht'*)

thank you: **spasibo** (spuh-*see*-buh)

theater: **tyeatr** (tee-*ahtr*) m

they: **oni** (ah-*nee*)

thing: **vyesh'** (vyesh') f

think: **dumat'** (*doo*-muht')

Thursday: **chyetvyerg** (cheet-*vyerk*) m

ticket: **bilyet** (bee-*lyet*) m

tie: **galstuk** (*gahls*-took) m

time: **vryemya** (*vrye*-mye) n

today: **syegodnya** (see-*vohd*-nye)

tomorrow: **zavtra** (*zahf*-truh)

too (excessively): **slishkom** (*sleesh*-kuhm)

train: **poyezd** (*poh*-eest) m

travel: **putyeshyestvovat'**(poo-tee-*shehst*-vuh-vuht')

Tuesday: **vtornik** (*ftohr*-neek) m

turn: **povorachivat'/povyernut'** (puh-vah-*rah*-chee-vuht'/puh-veer-*noot'*)

U

university: **univyersityet** (oo-nee-veer-see-*tyet*) m

V

vacation: **otpusk** (*oht*-poosk) m

vegetables: **ovosh'i** (*oh*-vuh-sh'ee)

visa: **viza** (*vee*-zuh) f

W

wait: **zhdat'** (zhdaht')

waiter: **ofitsiant** (uh-fee-tsih-*ahnt*) m

want: **khotyet'** (khah-*tyet'*)

warm: **tyoplyj** (*tyop*-lihy)

water: **voda** (vah-*dah*) f

wear: **nosit'/nyesti** (nah-*seet'*/nees-*tee*)

Wednesday: **sryeda** (sree-*dah*) f

week: **nyedyelya** (nee-*dye*-lye) f

well: **khorosho** (khuh-rah-*shoh*)

west: **zapad** (*zah*-puht) m

what: **chto** (shtoh)

when: **kogda** (kuhg-*dah*)

where: **gdye** (gdye)

white: **byelyj** (*bye*-lihy)

who: **kto** (ktoh)

why: **pochyemu** (puh-chee-*moo*)

wife: **zhyena** (zhih-*nah*) f

window: **okno** (ahk-*noh*) n

wine: **vino** (vee-*noh*) n

winter: **zima** (zee-*mah*) f

woman: **zhyensh'ina** (*zhehn*-sh'ee-nuh) f

word: **slovo** (*sloh*-vuh) n

work: **rabotat'** (ruh-*boh*-tuht')

Y

year: **god** (goht) m

yellow: **zhyoltyj** (*zhohl*-tihy)

yesterday: **vchyera** (fchee-*rah*)

you (plural, formal): **vy** (vih)

you (singular, informal): **ty** (tih)

young: **molodoj** (muh-lah-*dohy*)

you're welcome: **pozhalujsta** (pah-*zhah*-loos-tuh)

Z

zip code: **indyex** (*een*-dehks) m

Appendix C
Answer Key

The following are all the answers to the Fun & Games activities.

Chapter 1

Match the Russian letters with the sounds they correspond to:

1. b 2. a 3. e 4. d 5. c

Sound out the Russian words and recognize their meaning:

1. vodka 2. borsht (beet soup) 3. perestroika 4. glasnost
5. sputnik 6. tsar

Chapter 2

Find the nominative singular:

1. **komp'yutyer** 2. **kniga** 3. **okno** 4. **koshka** 5. **magazin**

How many of these Russian numerals can you recognize?

1 **odin**
2 **dva**
4 **chyetyrye**
8 **vosyem'**
12 **dvyenadtsat'**
15 **pyatnadtsat'**
20 **dvadtsat'**
100 **sto**
500 **pyat'sot**
1,000 **tysyacha**
20,347 **dvadtsat' tysyach trista sorok syem'**
600,091 **shyest'sot tysyach dyevyanosto odin**

Chapter 3

Practice saying *Hello* in Russian:

1. **Zdravstvuj!** 2. **Zdravstvujtye!** 3. **Zdravstvujtye!**
4. **Zdravstvujtye!** 5. **Zdravstvuj!** 6. **Zdravstvujtye!**
7. **Zdravstvujtye!**

Practicing greetings by the time of day:

Dobryj dyen'! (3 p.m.) **Dobroye utro!** (11 a.m.) **Dobroye utro!** (8 a.m.) **Dobryj vyechyer!** (8 p.m.)

Unscramble the dialogue:

Nina: **Zdravstvuj! Davaj poznakomimsya!**
Natasha: **Davaj!**
Nina: **Myenya zovut Nina. A kak tyebya zovut?**
Natasha: **Myenya zovut Natasha.**
Nina: **Ochyen' priyatno!**
Natasha: **Mnye tozhye.**

Chapter 4

Which of the two words indicates a woman?

1. b. **amyerikanka** 2. b. **russkaya** 3. b. **nyemka** 4. a. **yevryejka** 5. a. **frantsuzhyenka**

Which of the three words doesn't belong to the group?

1. **plyemyannik** 2. **otyets** 3. **doch'** 4. **babushka** 5. **otyets**

Which of the following statements just doesn't make sense?

4. **Domokhozyajka rabotayet na fabrikye.**

Chapter 5

Which of the following two dishes would you most likely eat for breakfast in Russia?

1. a. **yaichnitsa** 2. b. **butyerbrod s kolbasoj** 3. a. **butyerbrod s syrom** 4. b. **kasha** 5. a. **varyen'ye**

Which of the following phrases would you probably use or hear while making a restaurant reservation?

1. **Ya khotyel by zakazat' stolik na subbotu.**
3. **Na dvoikh.**
4. **Skol'ko chyelovyek?**
5. **Na vosyem' chasov.**
8. **Ya khotyela by zakazat' stolik na syegodnya.**
9. **Na kakoye vryemya?**

Chapter 6

At which of these stores are you likely to find the following items?

1. b 2. d 3. a 4. c 5. g 6. e 7. f

Making comparisons:

1. b 2. d 3. c 4. e

Chapter 7

Which of the following two days comes earlier during the week?

1. **ponyedyel'nik** 2. **chyetvyerg** 3. **voskryesyen'ye**
4. **voskryesyen'ye**

Which of the two verbs **— nachinayetsya** or **nachinayet —** would you use?

1. **nachinayet** 2. **nachinayetsya** 3. **nachinayetsya** 4. **nachinayet**

Which of the following phrases would you probably use to express that you liked the show or performance you attended?

1. **Mnye ponravilsya spyektakl'.** 2. **Potryasayush'ye!** 5. **Ochyen' krasivyj balyet.**

Chapter 8

Match the phrases:

1. b 2. c 3. d 4. a

Where are you most likely to see all these things?

1. c 2. b 3. a

What do they like to do?

Vanessa Mae **lyubit igrat' na skripkye.**
Renoir **lyubit pisat' maslom.**
Michelangelo **lyubit lyepit'.**
Tolstoy **lyubit pisat' romany.**
Santana **lyubit igrat' na gitarye.**

Chapter 9

Which words and expressions indicate types of phones?

1. **mobil'nik** (mobile phone) 2. **knopochnyj tyelyefon** (touch-tone phone)
5**. trubka** (mobile phone)

The telephone dialogue in the right order:

d. **Mozhno Marinu?**
a. **Mariny nyet doma. A kto yeyo sprashivayet?**
c. **Eto Pyetya. Pyeryedajtye pozhalujsta chto zvonil Pyetya.**
b. **Khorosho.**

Match the Russian equivalents on the left for the English phrases:

1. b 2. c 3. d 4. a

Chapter 10

Match the rooms with the most appropriate furniture:

1. c 2. a 3. b

In which of the following sections of the Classifieds will you NOT find information about apartments for rent?

3. **Rabota**

Chapter 11

Find Russian equivalents for the given dates:

1. a 2. d 3. b 4. c

Which of the following places of interest is not located in St. Petersburg?

2. **Novodyevich'ye kladbish'ye**

Chapter 12

Which of these sentences don't make sense?

2. **Ya yedu pyeshkom.**
4. **My idyom v Moskvu.**

Which of the following will you NOT see at an airport?

c. **poyezd**

Chapter 13

Select the appropriate response for the following phrases:

1. a. **Odnomyestnyj nomyer, pozhalujsta.**
2. b. **Na kakoye chislo?**
3. c. **Kak vasha familiya?**

Help John Evans fill out his hotel registration form:

imya — John
familiya — Evans
adryes — 123 Highpoint Drive, Chicago, USA
domashnij tyelyefon — 815/555-5544

Unscramble the dialogue:

b. **U myenya zabronirovan nomyer.**
d. **Kak vasha familiya?**
a. **Moya familiya Ivanov.**
c. **Zapolnitye ryegistratsionnuyu kartochku.**

Chapter 14

Matching money-related activities with places where they are appropriate:

1. c 2. d 3. b 4. a

Putting descriptions of interactions with a Russian bank in chronological order:

c. **otkryt' schyot**
a. **sdyelat' vklad**
b. **zakryt' schyot**

Making payments:

1. Tom 2. Mickey

Chapter 15

Which would you use: **gdye** or **kuda**?

1. **kuda** 2. **gdye** 3. **gdye** 4. **kuda** 5. **kuda**

Select the correct translation of the English phrases:

1. a. **ryadom s bankom**
2. a. **naprotiv banka**
3. a. **sprava ot banka**

Which of the suburbs is farthest from St. Petersburg?

2. **Ryepino —** 70 kilometers away

Chapter 16

What place would you call?

1. c   2. a   3. b

Matching symptoms with the most probable sicknesses:

1. b   2. c   3. a

Picking the word that doesn't belong:

1. **gripp**   2. **pryestupnik**   3. **pozhar**

Appendix D
On the CD

Track 1: Introduction

Track 2: Pronouncing Russian letters (Chapter 1)

Track 3: Using English cognates (Chapter 1)

Track 4: Using different verb tenses (Chapter 2)

Track 5: Meeting and greeting (Chapter 3)

Track 6: Introducing people to each other (Chapter 3)

Track 7: Talking about your nationality and ethnic background (Chapter 4)

Track 8: Talking about food (Chapter 5)

Track 9: Ordering a meal (Chapter 5)

Track 10: Finding the haberdashery department (Chapter 6)

Track 11: Telling about a new dress (Chapter 6)

Track 12: Asking for the time (Chapter 7)

Track 13: Discussing a ballet performance (Chapter 7)

Track 14: Talking about books (Chapter 8)

Track 15: Discussing sports (Chapter 8)

Track 16: Getting the wrong number (Chapter 9)

Track 17: Making a phone call (Chapter 9)

Track 18: Talking about renting an apartment (Chapter 10)

Track 19: Buying furniture (Chapter 10)

Track 20: Getting a job (Chapter 10)

Track 21: Submitting documents for a visa (Chapter 11)

Track 22: Talking about moving around (Chapter 12)

Track 23: Going through passport control (Chapter 12)

Track 24: Making hotel reservations (Chapter 13)

Track 25: Checking in to a hotel (Chapter 13)

Track 26: Exchanging money (Chapter 14)

Track 27: Opening a bank account (Chapter 14)

Track 28: Giving directions to a restaurant (Chapter 15)

Track 29: Asking for directions to a museum (Chapter 15)

Track 30: Calling the ambulance (Chapter 16)

Track 31: Going to the doctor (Chapter 16)

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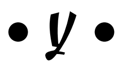


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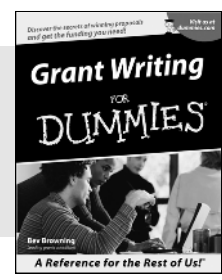
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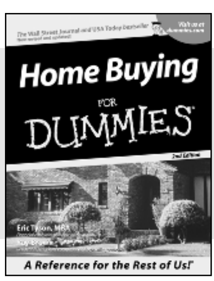
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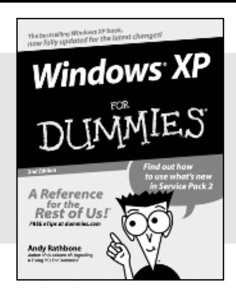


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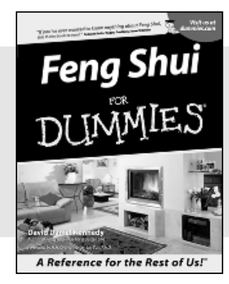
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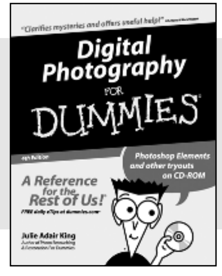
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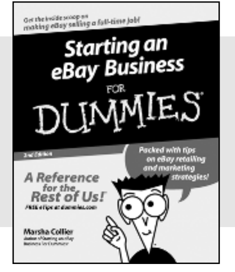
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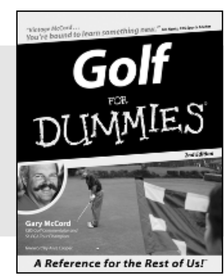
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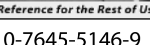
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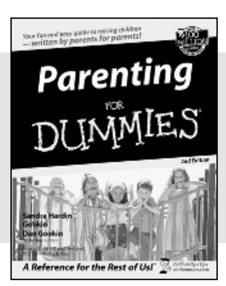


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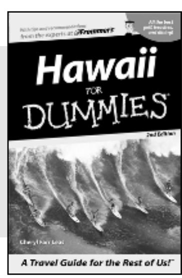


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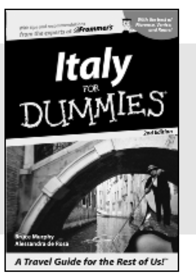
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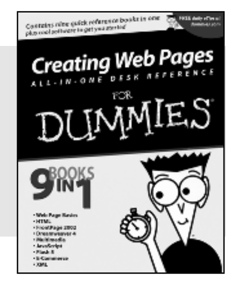


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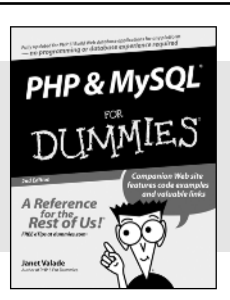
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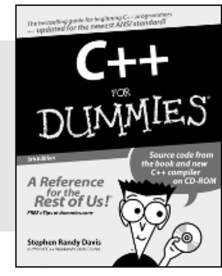


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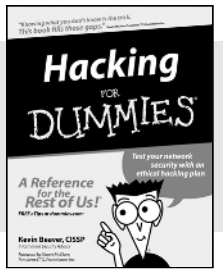
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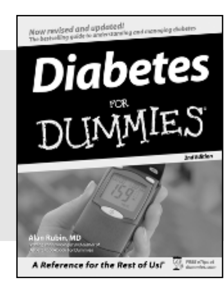


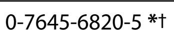
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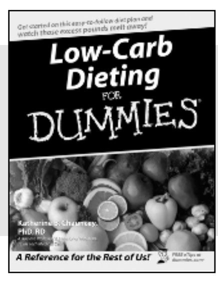
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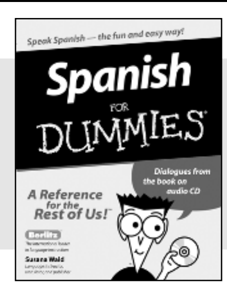


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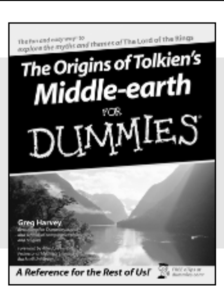
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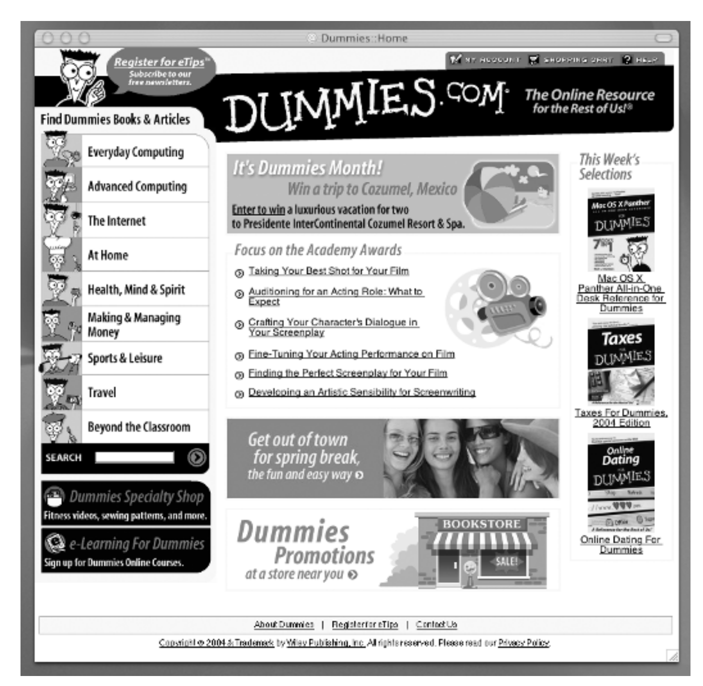
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